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A WEEK OF THE WORLD

IRISH NOTES

RATHER oddly two of the most violent supporters of President De Valera, in his opposition to the ratification of the recent agreement by which Ireland is to be given a dominion status, were Mr. Barton and Mr. Erskine Childers, both of whom are Protestants and Englishmen.

In commenting upon the present discussion of the treaty, the London *Outlook* publishes an interesting story to the effect that a year ago when Mr. Griffith was acting head of Sinn Fein in Ireland, and De Valera was an exile in New York, the Sinn Fein Intelligence Department was informed that it must arrange to bring the latter gentleman home. Its directors accomplished this by the amusing device of persuading the British authorities that De Valera had experienced a change of heart in the United States and would return a 'moderate,' to bring confusion into the councils of the gunmen and extremists. So the imperial authorities allowed the Sinn Fein president to return, and put Mr. Arthur Griffith, who is leading the fight for the present treaty, into jail.

According to the *New Statesman*, Ulster's protest against the agreement takes the form of a bitter anti-English crusade. 'The national anthem is banned, and at a public dinner this week, attended by members of the Northern Government, nine tenths of the guests refused to rise for the toast to "The King."' It would certainly be an ironical outcome if Protestant Ireland should again become — as it was at an earlier period in Irish history — a centre of anti-English sentiment.

'Politics has so dominated Irish affairs,' says the London *Economist*, 'that the labor movement in Ireland has been overlooked.' Of the 650,000 wage earners in that country about 300,000 belong to the Irish Labor Party and Trades-Union Congress, an organization which combines political and trades-union functions. About half of the registered members are enrolled in the Transport and General Workers Union, which espouses the 'one big union' idea. In addition to the 300,000 members of the major society, there are about 40,000 organized workers in the Belfast area, who are Orangemen and politically opposed to the Irish Labor Party.

Irish trades-unionism possesses a remarkable degree of discipline, though probably this is due to the unanimity of action evoked by the present political crisis. Short general strikes called by the Trades-Union Congress have been unanimously carried out.

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It has been predicted that when an autonomous government is set up in Dublin, the Labor Party will play a very important part in Irish politics. Its members already hold about one quarter of the municipal offices in Ireland.

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THE EGYPTIAN PROBLEM

A CORRESPONDENT of *Journal de Genève*, writing from Egypt immediately after the return of Adly Pasha from his unsuccessful mission to London, says his home-coming 'was not greeted by the enthusiastic and deliriously hopeful crowd which was present at his departure, but by a population discouraged and fairly stupefied with despair.' The Egyptians expected great things of the London negotiations, and have received instead what they regard as military occupation and a continuance of the British protectorate under another name. This correspondent says that the British plan is 'equivalent to that government's complete control of the public service.' Those Egyptians whose education and ability qualify them for governmental positions are largely engaged in managing their estates and personal affairs. The present civil service is consequently in the hands of foreigners, most of whom speak French and have a French judicial training. In fact the large foreign colonies in Egypt — French, Italian, Greek — create a complication which is often overlooked. It is difficult for Great Britain to guard against the ascendancy of rival European powers in Egypt without curtailing the political rights of the Egyptians. A movement in favor of passive resistance is spreading among the people, which promises to be more embarrassing to the government than open revolt.

An Egyptian publicist writing to the *Journal des Débats* reviews the history of the present negotiations as recorded in Lord Curzon's note of November tenth, stating the principles which were to govern the relations between Great Britain and Egypt; the reply of Adly Pasha to this note; and the note addressed by General Allenby to the Sultan. He objects especially to the clause in the Curzon proposal which provides for a British High Commissioner possessing special diplomatic rights and privileges not enjoyed by the representatives of other governments; the power given the British government to veto treaties between Egypt and other countries — somewhat similar to the rights exercised by the United States in Cuba; and the salient point at issue between the British government and the Egyptian people, namely the extent of the former's military occupation. Furthermore, according to this publicist's interpretation of the British proposals, that government would retain virtual control of Egyptian finances, as well as all its present rights and privileges in the Sudan.

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MULTITUDINOUS RUSSIA

THE author of an article in *L'Europe Nouvelle* enumerates seven 'allied republics,' seven 'autonomous republics,' and eleven 'autonomous territories' embraced within the general confines of the Russian Soviet Republic. The allied and autonomous republics are organized on the model of Moscow, and maintain agents at that city. They do not have independent armies or foreign diplomatic representatives. They send delegates to the Pan-Russian Soviet Congress, which meets annually at Moscow. The so-called autonomous territories possess less independence of action. They usually include the members of a single one of the numerous ethnic groups into which the people of the former Empire are divided.

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This author does not include the Far Eastern Republic in his list.

It is not possible as yet to predict what course of development this medley of ancient, primitive, tribal and local organizations, and of inchoate Communist political forms, is likely to pursue; but the Russian government at the present time seems to resemble a loose federation, dominated by an army under the direct control of a comparatively small group of Soviet officials, who are thus able to hold extreme decentralizing tendencies in check, and to propagate their social theories over well toward one third of the land area of the globe.

However, the formal change in the constitution of the old Empire is less radical than might be imagined. After the revolution of 1905, the provinces of Russia were in many respects semi-independent satrapies, under governors who exercised virtually arbitrary jurisdiction, qualified only by the fact that they depended for their appointment on St. Petersburg.

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GERMANY AND AUSTRIA EXPLAIN

Dr. Rathenau during his recent conversations with British officials in London replied to the charge of wasteful administration and other economic misconduct brought against his government and people. While there are now 702,000 civil servants as compared with 201,000 in 1914, over half a million of these represent transfers to the Central government of persons previously employed by the several States of the former Empire. Among these are 371,000 former state railway servants, 28,000 postal officials, and 55,000 customs officers. The net increase in government employees since 1914 is, in round numbers, 46,000, and this is accounted for partly by the introduction of the eight-hour day. Dr. Rathenau contends that, reduced to gold marks, the relative cost of the civil service is lower than before the war.

The tremendous rise in the value of German securities simply records the decline of the mark as a measure of physical value. The people of Germany are living more modestly than ever before. For example, their expenses for meat average only forty-seven per cent of what they were in 1913. Germany's trade balance continues to be unfavorable, largely because she has to import so many foodstuffs and raw materials.

Dr. Friedrich Hertz, a high Austrian authority, denies that Czechoslovakia has inherited a materially larger share of the industries of former Austria. He prints statistics from the census of 1902, which are apparently the latest where this information is given, showing that the number of factory operatives employed in present Austria was then 1,101,000 as compared with 1,192,000 in Bohemia, but that the horsepower used in Austrian factories was larger than that used in the factories of the neighboring kingdom. Before the war fifty-three per cent of the population of present Austria did professional work, a fact accounted for by the great number of women earning independent livelihoods in that country. This was not, according to Dr. Hertz, due to the concentration of the civil service at Vienna. He shows by comparative figures that the number of government officials in proportion to the population has always been less in Vienna than in Paris. Newspaper reports from Austria indicate that in response to the overcrowding of intellectual as compared with manual occupations, an increasing proportion of young persons in that city are entering the trade schools, where attendance has risen by one fifth, while the lyceums are slimly attended and many classes

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in them have had to close. The best-attended courses are those in watch-making, optical work, jewelry-making, dressmaking and tailoring.

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INTRA-EMPIRE TARIFFS

TARIFF controversies are unsettling the good humor of Great Britain's dominions and colonies in the South Pacific. A tariff bill recently presented to the New Zealand Parliament is criticized as being too liberal toward Australia, which imposes an average duty of forty-five per cent upon goods imported from her sister Commonwealth. New Zealand's impost on Australian goods averages only twenty-five per cent. Australia has also imposed a heavy tariff on bananas, which has practically destroyed her trade with Fiji. Only one steamer is running now in what was once a prosperous service. At this writing the Commonwealth houses of Parliament are at loggerheads over a proposed revision of the banana schedule. Australia itself has excellent banana country in the state of Queensland, though this branch of agriculture has been largely in the hands of Chinese planters and commission houses.

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TIPPING IN EUROPE

SINCE the war tips have been abolished in the hotels, cafés, and restaurants of Italy and Germany, and in many establishments in other European countries. Their place has been taken by a fixed service charge of ten or fifteen per cent, which is added to the customer's bill. An occasional free spender adds a private tip, but this is not common and in some instances is refused.

In any case, the new system is now sufficiently well enforced to allow deductions as to its effect upon traveling expenses. When visitors make long stops at the same hotel, and when there are several members in a party, the percentage works out higher than under the old system of voluntary tips. For short stays and single travelers, the reverse is probably true. One disadvantage of the new arrangement is that waiters try to force things on their clients; since the more the client eats and drinks, the larger the sum which the waiter receives from his percentage.

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PORT COMPETITION BETWEEN BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA

AT present most of the produce shipped from the interior of South America reaches the coast by river, much as the produce of the Mississippi Valley passed through New Orleans before the completion of our eastern trunk lines. However, Brazil proposes to extend its railways to tap the upper reaches of the Parana and Paraguay, and to divert this traffic to Brazilian ports. Just at present, interest is centred upon connecting Asunción with the Atlantic. The capital of Paraguay would thus be brought within six hundred and fifty miles of the nearest Brazilian seaport, as compared with nearly nine hundred miles to Buenos Aires. Associated with this enterprise is the proposal to make certain Brazilian coast towns free ports for the benefit of Paraguay.

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FIGHTING IN THE UKRAINE

EUROPEAN dispatches have brought us fragmentary and obscure reports of a new revolt in the Ukraine against the Moscow government. A review of the operations up to late in November in *Pester Lloyd* describes the movement as starting in Galicia and the northern border districts of Rumania. From this region as a base the Ukraine was invaded in three directions: north, north-

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east, and southeast. The insurrectionary bands have won several important victories, rolling up the Bolshevist army by defeating and turning its right wing and entirely destroying and dispersing several important units. At the time this account was published, early in December, the Ukrainian forces were approaching Kief, and were within fifty or sixty miles of Odessa. They had occupied practically all the intervening points beyond the Rumanian frontier, and presumably were receiving active aid from Poland and Rumania. According to reports from other sources, however, the importance and extent of this revolt against the Soviet authorities have been much exaggerated; and the present disturbances are merely a somewhat accentuated phase of the general unrest which has prevailed in the Ukraine ever since the Revolution.

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LETTLAND AND RUSSIA

Le Temps prints an interview given to its special correspondent in Riga by the Premier of Lettland, who said the first tasks before the new government, now three years old, were to balance the budget, which it is hoped to accomplish next year; and to secure a favorable balance of trade, which promises to be a slower and more difficult task. Lettland formerly manufactured for the Russian market, of which it was then a part. It no longer has that market. It must change its industries in recognition of the new situation. Eventually the country hopes to export sufficient flax and timber products, including paper and cellulose, to balance its importations.

With regard to relations with Russia, the Soviet government is doing all in its power to fulfill the terms of its treaty with Lettland; but it finds its own lack of administrative organization, and a certain apathy in some quarters, an obstacle. The Russian authorities sought last spring to lease certain factories in Riga, but the proposal was rejected. A revival of business prosperity in the Baltic land can hardly occur until railway communication with Russia has been improved, and that country's markets are reopened.

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MARK SPECULATION

In an article upon reparations, a contributor to the *New Statesman* characterizes the extent to which exchange speculation is carried on 'by rogues and dupes throughout the world' as 'an astounding commentary on the organized anarchy of to-day.' Even in remote parts of Scotland there are 'Mark Clubs' for promoting speculation in German marks. In Holland are deposits running into hundreds of millions of marks standing in the names of Chinese, South Americans, and Jews of every country. No bank or business firm of sound standing dreams of holding marks for speculative purposes. It sells immediately at the current price those which it receives. But what this writer characterizes as 'the underworld of commerce and finance' has made the mark its favorite gambling counter for the past two years, and has suffered tremendous losses thereby. Mr. Keynes, as we observed in a recent issue of the *Living Age*, estimates that the equivalent of a billion dollars has gone into German pockets since the Armistice through the losses of foreign purchasers of German currency. The writer of the article we have just quoted estimates the cumulative losses of foreigners who have gambled in marks, between May and November of the present year, at eighty-five million pounds, which even at current exchange would exceed a third of Mr. Keynes' estimate for these losses during the past three years.

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MINOR NOTES

COMMENTING upon the fact that 'jazz-band instruments entering France are now liable to a tax,' the *Westminster Gazette* observes that as this seems to cover anything that will make a noise, from a baby's rattle or a saucepan to a machine-gun, the tax ought to be comprehensive enough to afford considerable protection to French industry.

THE proverbial dictum that the poor are the most generous givers to the poor is confirmed by the example of the Vienna workers, who have collected among their own distressed people more than twenty million *kronen* for the relief of Russian famine sufferers.

THE London *Statist* publishes monthly index figures showing the value of the pound sterling 'in terms of the currencies of twenty-eight countries abroad.' Beginning with 98.5 in January 1920, this figure passed par, or 100, between March and April of that year. It was 122.4 last January, and though the rise was not consistent throughout the summer, reached 128.1 in November.

UNDER the title, 'Squandering on the Rhine,' a Cologne correspondent of the *Berliner Tageblatt* attacks what he alleges to be the extravagant burdens imposed upon Germany by the forces of occupation. Family connections of the Allied officers and soldiers are said to be migrating *en masse* from France and Belgium to these districts. The following passage from this criticism will be of special interest to Americans: —

A particularly oppressive institution in the American Zone of Occupation is the Y.M.C.A. It has taken possession of German property in a most un-Christian way, in order to promote the Christian education and welfare of its troops. Germany is thus obliged to contribute to the support of an organization which is technically no part of the army of occupation, for which alone it is obligated to pay under the treaty.

THE *Herald of Asia* quotes from the Metropolitan Police Statistics of Tokyo to the effect that machinists in that city receive as much as ten yen, or five dollars a working-day, as compared with less than half that amount — at the present rate of exchange — paid to German machinists in the Krupp works. At the same time wages tend to increase rather than decrease in Japan. Commenting upon this, this journal says: —

In the meantime European goods, produced more cheaply than those of Japan, are crowding our wares from the market in China, the East Indies, and elsewhere.

GERMAN airplane engineers continue to make progress with gliders. Recently a constructor flew twenty-one minutes in a machine without a motor — the longest period in the air so far attained with such a device. The present machine represents experiments continued since 1910, and is a monoplane with eleven metres spread and slightly over fifteen square metres of surface. The profile form is such that the plane will move forward against a very strong wind.

BERLIN organ-grinders have adopted an innovation which promises to be both popular and profitable for them. They now go about in couples, with two organs, which they play simultaneously. They also distribute the words of popular songs to the crowd that gathers about them, and encourage their listeners to sing these to their accompaniment. In this way they gather a larger number of hearers at each stopping-place and collect a richer harvest of small change.

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HISTORY OF THE INTERALLIED DEBTS

BY 'MERMEIX'

From *Le Figaro, December* 20
(Paris Liberal Daily)

We should have a frank discussion of the debts which the Allied governments contracted with one another during the war. It is a question which hitherto has been touched only on the surface. Why?

Let us start out with the origin of these debts. They mainly represent the cost of purchases made by one country from another country. Money was possibly paid directly to certain of the smaller powers, like Serbia and Montenegro. Report has it that England subsidized the King of Hejaz to the extent of half a million pounds sterling a month, which he employed to maintain his Arab troops. But all the obligations contracted between England and France, England and America, America and France, and America and Italy, were for payments due for various commodities and articles required by their armies and for the support of their civil population.

For example, we bought steel from England and wheat and chemicals from America. Since we had to pay pounds sterling or dollars for these goods, the British Treasury and the Washington Treasury placed money at our disposal for this purpose, debiting us with the sum in question. The result of these credit operations was that the franc depreciated very little prior to the Armistice. The law of supply and demand did not depress our exchange, because we did not have to buy with French money the foreign money we needed to pay our bills. All our foreign payments were covered by credits.

A few days after the armistice of November 11, 1918, the French government thought the favorable moment had arrived for some agreement among the Allies relative to their mutual indebtedness. The credits which we had opened were not yet closed. In England they were renewable from month to month. In America they ran for longer terms. However, since they were war credits, it was evident that they could not be continued after peace was proclaimed. We ought to take measures betimes to prevent the financial crisis that would be precipitated by an abrupt return to normal credit relations with our neighbors.

At a date which I cannot state exactly, M. Klotz, our Minister of Finance, telegraphed to London proposing a conference of representatives of the British, American, and French treasuries, in order to arrange an agreement between France as a debtor country and the United States and England as creditor countries for the transition from war conditions to normal conditions. No reply was received to this telegram because Bonar Law, at that time Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the Unionist Party — the most important faction of the Coalition — was busily engaged with Lloyd George in the electoral campaign. As soon as the elections were over, the Coalition Cabinet was reorganized. Bonar Law became Lord of the Privy Seal, and was replaced in the exchequer by Austen Chamberlain. The new Chancellor found M. Klotz's

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proposal awaiting his attention. Instead of replying he felt it desirable to sound America first. It is quite certain that he did not demand the canceling or reduction of these credits. That would have been incompatible with the dignity of the British Empire. But the mere suggestion of an 'arrangement' affecting the billions advanced to England caused indignation at Washington. An arrangement was interpreted as meaning a scheme to obtain from America accommodations and possible concessions which would be onerous to that country. Such a request, received from the richest of the Allies, from the government whose finances were in the least precarious condition, seemed but the forerunner of other requests from nations which the war had afflicted more cruelly. Consequently, to consent to negotiate an arrangement with England would create a dangerous precedent, which all the other debtors of America would utilize in order to obtain most-favored-nation treatment.

Mr. Wilson's Cabinet was faced by the alternative of either offending all its associates in the war by playing the rôle of a heartless creditor, or of providing a powerful political argument for its adversaries at home by agreeing to the reduction or cancellation of these debts. We should not forget that a new Congress, elected the fourth of the previous November, was to enter upon its duties in March 1919, with a Republican majority. As soon as this happened, Mr. Wilson's supporters would be in a minority of fifty in the Lower House and a minority of two in the Senate. In a vote upon the Treaty, which required a two-thirds majority, the Democrats lacked seventeen votes of the number necessary to endorse the President's policy. Mr. Wilson did not dare to give further ground of offense to an opposition so powerful and so determined, by making hasty sacrifices at the expense of American tax-payers.

Consequently the best that America could do was to refrain from discussing the question proposed by Austen Chamberlain. And that was the course she took.

None the less, American political leaders were too shrewd business men not to forsee the crisis which would follow the restoration of a free and world-wide money market. All of the belligerent countries, and in particular France, for whom America cherished special regard, would be forced to import vast quantities of goods from abroad. Unless they were given some accommodation, their economic condition after peace threatened to be worse than it had been during the war. In private conversations during January and February, 1919, between Clemenceau and Klotz on the one hand and Wilson and House on the other, these disturbing prospects were thoroughly discussed. The Americans were anxious to do all in their power. It was not proposed to cancel the debts between the Allies, but to work out some plan that would carry the situation over during the interval between the war and a settled state of peace. However, nothing could be accomplished without England, to whom all the other Allied governments, except the United States, were indebted, and from whom those countries would have to import largely henceforth.

Therefore, Austen Chamberlain came to Paris in February 1919, in response to a pressing invitation to confer with M. Klotz and Colonel House. The result of their interview was not a happy one. Mr. Chamberlain could not accept any suggestion made to him. Now that peace was at hand each nation thought only of its own affairs. So much the better for those

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who were in a position to do so satisfactorily. Great Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer looked forward with confidence to a speedy rise in the value of the pound sterling, although it had not yet occurred. He did not perceive — what we have discovered later — that though a moderate rise in exchange constitutes a premium which the international purchaser pays to the international seller, an excessive rise, such as subsequently occurred, brings trade to a standstill. Customers cannot buy, or buy only what is strictly necessary, from a country whose money is excessively dear in comparison with the money of the purchasing country. From that it is but a step to unemployment and depression. However, we had not yet learned by practical experience the evils which excessive rise of exchange brings upon those whom that rise seems to benefit. Consequently, no agreement could be made with Mr. Chamberlain. Since any compromise between the franc and the dollar depended upon a compromise between those two coins and the pound sterling, nothing could be done to avoid a crisis; and England took steps which precipitated trouble. In March, Mr. Chamberlain refused to renew our credits.

Almost at the same moment an incident occurred in the Reparations Committee of the Peace Conference which compelled America to make the categorical statement regarding the Allied debts which Wilson and House had so far been able to avoid.

At a session of the Financial Committee of the Conference, the Italian delegate raised the question of the adjustment of the Interallied debts. At once a reservation was registered by the American delegate, followed by the English delegate. In fact, these were more than reservations. The American delegate called for the previous question, and the Italian proposal could not even be debated. This motion was supported by the English representative, who wanted to refer the matter to his government. M. Klotz, who was chairman of the Committee, refused to put the previous question. Italy's proposal could not be debated in the Commission, because two of the delegates were unwilling to take part in the discussion. But it could be referred to the Supreme Council, that is, the old Council of Ten, which was still functioning.

This was late in February. Some days later André Tardieu, who retained his title of High Commissioner to the United States, although he was also a plenipotentiary at the Conference, received a dispatch from the American Treasury Department in his first capacity, which was in substance as follows: —

'WASHINGTON, *March* 8, 1919. — I learn that at a conference of the Financial Drafting Committee, appointed by the Council of Ten of the Peace Conference, one of the Allied governments has moved in connection with the financial adjustments accompanying the peace, a new distribution and consolidation of the war debts. This proposal has been strongly supported by M. Klotz, the representative of your government, who asserted that the question should be debated while the delegates of all the Powers were present at Paris.

'Although the Drafting Committee has not declared this question to be one which must be mentioned in the Peace Treaty, I learn that this Committee has referred to the Executive Council the whole question of an agreement among the Allied Powers relative to the consolidation and the redistribution of the war debts. It is not necessary to inform you how surprised I am at the attitude taken by M. Klotz in

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the name of your government. I must inform you in the most precise terms that the American Treasury, which, as you know, has absolute authority conferred upon it by Congress to deal with the loans which it has made to foreign governments, will not consent to any discussion at the Peace Conference or elsewhere of a project or an agreement having for its object the cancellation, consolidation, or redistribution of the obligations of foreign governments to the United States.

'You will also understand that the Treasury cannot consider continuing advances to any Allied government that favors a project which would result in rendering uncertain the payment, at their maturity, of the loans made by the American Treasury.

'I shall be greatly obliged if you will communicate the opinion of the Treasury to your government. I await an early reply.'

This dispatch — rather unusual in its wording — was communicated immediately to M. Klotz by M. Tardieu, who answered, we presume, that the Supreme Council was entitled to debate any question submitted to it by its committees, and that the committees could not refuse to refer to the Council of Premiers the questions which lay within their jurisdiction.

There the matter rested so far as France was concerned. In the case of Italy, it went farther. American credits to that country were stopped after the first of March.

It was incompatible with our national dignity to proceed with a proposal which we had not yet formulated, and which had nevertheless evoked such a prompt rebuff. The American Treasury was independent of Mr. Wilson, and since it had issued its edict, we could not go farther without courting a mortifying refusal.

REALITIES OF WASHINGTON — A RADICAL–LABOR VIEW

BY W. N. EWER

From the *Labor Monthly, December*
(London Radical International Labor Review)

A month ago sentimental Liberalism was in full song. The Washington Conference was destined to bring that long overdue millennium without tears. Mr. Hughes was to redeem President Wilson's failure as Messiah.

'America,' cried the *Daily News*, in an ecstasy of enthusiasm, 'has shown a despairing world the way of salvation.'

'This,' said Mr. Lloyd George, 'is the greatest event for nineteen centuries.'

An American Liberal outdid him: — 'It is the greatest event for nineteen hundred and twenty-one years'; thus abruptly dismissing the Crucifixion to the second grade.

That was a month since. To-day even sentimental Liberals (of whom, by the way, there are not a few in the

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ranks of Labor and Socialism) are feeling a little chilly about Washington. The vision has faded very rapidly. Mr. Hughes, it seems, is no Messiah: not even a magician: just an able but unimaginative New York lawyer, not fitted either by training or temperament to cope with the clever exponents of that old European diplomatic game which no American has yet learned to play.

The glamour has gone. That is good. It enables us to talk of the realities without chiding from some touchy romantic who resents every fact that disturbs his pleasant dreams.

Mr. Hughes is no Messiah. Let us do him justice at once. He never thought he was. He does not suffer from the *Gottmensch* delusion that afflicted poor Mr. Wilson. He called that conference, not as a Savior of Society or a purveyor of millenniums, but as a hard-headed American statesman.

The Washington Conference was the logical, foreseeable development of American policy after the Wilson fiasco and the Republican triumph at the polls.

By that gesture the United States drew out of world-politics. The Washington tradition, the world-unconsciousness of the Middle West, the election tactics of the Republican Party, dictated the withdrawal.

But economic facts forbade it. And neither sentiment, nor tradition, nor political opportunism, can resist economic pressure. America was bound to reënter world-politics, because America was in world-economics. Economic entanglement made political isolation impossible.

On the morrow of President Harding's election he sent Senator Medill McCormick on an inspection tour of Europe. I wrote then that this was the first sign: that within a year the Harding administration would be in conference with the European Powers, possibly discussing revision of the Treaty of Versailles, certainly discussing international politics in relation to America's international economic associations.

That was not a particularly clever prophecy. The thing was inevitable.

Two outstanding facts were bound to dominate and determine American policy: —

1. The gigantic debt of the chief European countries to the United States.

2. The insistent need of American capitalism for foreign markets.

America before the war was a debtor country. She emerged from the war the creditor of the world. Europe is in her debt to an extent scarcely realized. Government liabilities alone total a fantastic sum of over $11,000,000,000.[1]

And in addition there is a huge private debt. Before the war millions of American securities were held in Europe, and particularly in England. To-day British and European securities are held in America.

Yet American exports still exceed American imports by $5,000,000,000 a year. America is not receiving full payment for her goods. She is still giving credit.

Therefore, the financial stability of Europe is a matter of intense and direct concern to the United States. The solvency of a debtor is of prime importance to his creditor.

Here, then, was one urgent problem which American statesmanship was bound to tackle. Europe must, if possible, be preserved from bankruptcy — for European bankruptcy would mean a gigantic loss to American capitalists.

[1] Leaving Russia out of account, the chief items of this enormous liability are: — Great Britain, $4,166,318,358; France, $3,350,762,938; Italy, $1,648,034,050; Belgium, $375,280,147; Poland, $135,661,660.

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Europe must not merely be saved from bankruptcy. European governments must be enabled to balance their budgets — must be able to pay regularly, at least, the interest on these colossal loans.

Else that dangerous talk of a mutual cancellation of debts — very attractive to harassed Ministers of Finance — might grow; might reach the point where for 'cancellation by consent,' 'repudiation' might be substituted. Suppose Europe were to repudiate — were to announce, regretfully, inability to pay. No coercion, military or economic, would suffice for debt collecting. The imposition of 'sanctions' on the German model would be a costly and futile folly. American capital would have to cut its losses and make the best of a bad job.

If the European Governments (I include Britain, of course, in the category of 'European' States) are to remain solvent, European Governments must economize.

Economy — limitation of armaments — the line of thought is obvious. America could do nothing to secure economies on domestic expenditure. But she could do something — or try to do something — to secure a reduction of expenditure on armaments.

Europe must cut down its military and naval estimates in order that Europe may be able to pay its debts to America.

That is the quite simple genesis of the 'armaments' side of the Conference. No idealism, no pacifism, no millennium-mongery. Just a hard common-sense business proposition.

Let us turn from the question of debts to the question of fields for exploitation — the second influence that made impossible the continuance of the isolation policy so dear to the heart of Senator Borah and his colleagues.

America is no longer self-sufficing. Her Capitalism has reached the phase at which it must expand beyond its own political borders.

Said William C. Redfield to the American Manufacturers' Export Association in April of last year: —

> We cannot be foreign merchants very much longer in this country excepting on a diminishing and diminishing scale — we have got to become foreign constructors; we have got to build with American money — foreign enterprises, railroads, utilities, factories, mills, I know not what, in order that by large ownership in them we may command the trade that normally flows from their operation.

The inevitable processes of American Imperialism — the conquest of a Continent followed by expansion into the world, has been sketched brilliantly by Scott-Nearing: 'The logical goal of the American plutocracy is the economic, and, incidentally, the political, control of the world.'

North and South America are already conquered. The Union Jack flies at Ottawa. But $555,943,000 of Canadian securities are held in the United States; only $153,758,000 in Great Britain. The Monroe Doctrine is no longer a 'doctrine.' It is the expression of an economic fact.

But the Continent is insufficient. American Capitalism is looking — is bound to look — across the oceans for new territory to exploit.

There is not too much available. Most of the non-European world has been already carved up by the capitalist States which entered the competition a couple of generations ago — while American finance was still busy with the development of its own West. Africa is partitioned almost to the last rood.

Southern Asia is nearly in the same condition. When America — in the reaction against Wilsonism — refused the mandate for Armenia, she gave up her chance of any big share in the ex-

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ploitation of the former Ottoman dominions. Britain and France have now pegged out all the claims from the Levant to the Gulf of Cambodia. Only the influence of Russia has prevented annexation of Persia and Afghanistan. Siam is doomed.

There remains only one great field, the richest, that (unless the Soviet Republic were overthrown and Russia turned into a Tom Tiddler's ground) invites world Capitalism to-day. China, in spite of quarter of a century of concession-hunting, is still virtually untouched. It seems to predatory American Capitalism its destined sphere of plunder.

Here, then, is the second great economic need of America — the securing of opportunity for the exploitation of China.

And even here Wall Street has come late into the field. America took little or no part in the 'war of concessions,' which began about 1895. England and France, Russia, Germany, and Japan, scrambled for railway concessions and mining concessions and trading concessions and territorial concessions. America held aloof; made one or two futile protests against the establishment of privileges and monopolies; came into a financial consortium and withdrew again; began to fall behind in the race — mainly because her dominant interest for the moment was trade and not investment, commerce and not exploitation.

At the close of the war American financiers realized what had been happening. Not only had the other capitalist countries established themselves here and there in China during the two pre-war decades, but during the war itself Japan had begun to assert a domination over all China: had begun to claim a position of priority and 'special interests' as against all other countries. Manchuria and Eastern Inner Mongolia were well on the way to becoming Japanese protectorates. The 'Twenty-one Demands' of 1915, if China had conceded them, would have made her definitely a Japanese dependency. Even those that were conceded gave Japanese Capitalism extraordinary advantages over its competitors. And apart from concessions and treaty privileges Japan was exercising an overweening control over the Peking Government and the Generals who are its real masters.

That exceptionally incapable diplomatist, Mr. Lansing, had been tricked by the astute Viscount Ishii into a formal admission that Japan had 'special interests' in China on account of her geographical position. And his equally incapable chief — thinking of nothing but of saving his precious League of Nations — signed the Versailles Treaty, which gave Japan virtual sovereignty over Shantung.

American Capitalism was stung to action by that last final folly. The 'Shantung clauses' did far more to bring about the Wilson débâcle than is generally realized here. The refusal to ratify a treaty containing those clauses was the first declaration to the world that America meant to fight for her position in the Far East.

American Capitalism is going to exploit China, and the first step to that must be the ousting of Japan from the privileged position she has attained.

Again, therefore, America must emerge from her brief isolation. She must take steps to secure the annulment of those 'Shantung clauses' — which are in operation, though neither ratified by the United States nor as much as signed by China. She must secure the revocation of the treaty of 1915. She must prevent Japan from using her influence at Peking to extort similar concessions in future. She must break down that influence itself.

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Also, since this economic and diplomatic struggle may at any time lead to actual war, she must make quite sure that war with Japan would not involve war with Great Britain. The Anglo-Japanese alliance must be broken. Japan must be isolated in order that she may be coerced.

There is the equally simple genesis of the second part of the Washington programme. Again, no idealism (though much chatter about Chinese sovereign rights and about the 'open door'). No idealism, but just hard economic facts.

The European debt dictated a Disarmament Conference. The ambitions of American Capitalism dictated a Far Eastern Conference. The two blended easily and naturally.

And there was the Washington programme ready-made for the fooling of sentimental Liberalism.

Mr. Hughes's plan of campaign was simple and obvious.

First, the discussion of the limitation of naval armaments.

Then the isolation of Japan by the dissolution of the Anglo-Japanese alliance.

Then — her naval superiority in the Pacific definitely safeguarded — America could dictate the terms of a Chinese settlement.

The question of the limitation of military armaments could be taken later.

Simple — all too simple. That last decision (with certain others closely related to it) was the fatal blunder that has upset Mr. Hughes's calculations entirely.

Those associated blunders were: —

1. The undervaluing of the importance of France.

2. The ignoring of Germany and Russia.

Quite rightly, Mr. Hughes calculated that he could rely on the support of Great Britain.

For Great Britain is now in somewhat the same position in face of America as was Germany ten years ago in face of Great Britain. She has the the choice of being, as Prince von Bülow phrased it, 'her satellite or her antagonist.'

Germany chose the rôle of antagonist. She refused to be 'towed in the wake of English policy.' But England to-day dare not make that choice. She is too economically dependent on America. She cannot fight her. She dare scarcely offend her. Economic dependence implies political dependence. Willy-nilly, we must be 'towed in the wake of American policy.'

Very definitely this is true of these two questions of naval armaments and of Far Eastern policy.

Germany entered upon a competition in shipbuilding with England. It was not altogether an unequal contest. But Britain to-day dare not enter on such a competition with America. Her resources will not allow it. Offered a position of equality, she must gratefully accept it, foregoing her old claim to a paramount navy; its relinquishment being the only alternative to an exhausting conflict, resulting in definite inferiority.

So in the Far East. A British Minister might dream of leaguing with Japan against the menacing power of the United States. But to do this would be to destroy the British Empire. Race feeling is too strong. Neither Canada nor Australia would stand for such a policy. Both would secede rather than fight with Japan against the States.

Therefore, Mr. Hughes counted, and counted rightly, on British support.

He launched, with a fine dramatic sense, his plan for the limitation of capital ships, at the first sitting of the Conference. The British delegation supported him enthusiastically. The

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world rang with applause. And sentimental Liberalism felt happy. The millennium was at hand.

But in that dramatic declaration, Mr. Hughes committed one incredible folly. *He ignored France. He contemptuously — or with an offhandedness that gave the impression of contempt — relegated her with Italy to the category of second-rate naval Powers.*

It was a crass blunder, which no European statesman would have made.

France has a long tradition as the first naval Power on the Continent; the old maritime rival of England. Even when her battle fleet has been evidently weaker, she has never been content to accept a status of definite inferiority. She has sought other means of redressing the balance. In the nineties the *guerre de course* was the favored French strategy. Jean Bart and Duguay-Trouin were the admired models. The Great War has revived French naval hopes. The battleship is no longer what it was. The *guerre de course* — waged not by light cruisers, but by submarines and aeroplanes — is again being talked of; not lightly by journalists, but very seriously by admirals. It may still be possible to challenge England on the seas.

And the Entente is visibly in ruins.

Yet, with an almost incredible stupidity, Mr. Hughes left France out of the reckoning of the Big Sea Powers.

The folly brought a swift retort. The French Press began to demand that in any battleship agreement France should at least be accorded the same strength as Japan. The French delegation, in better touch with French naval opinion and the French admirals' plans, did not worry about battleships.

But at the very moment when Britain, for obvious reasons, was beginning to suggest very stringent limitations on the size and number of submarines, M. Briand dramatically announced that France would object to any limitation of her rights of building and using submarines — and then went home.

That declaration has blown sky-high all chance of a real limitation of naval armaments.

Limitation of battleships there may be; though even here the French attitude may bring a breakdown. Will Great Britain accept a ratio of ten against a possible French seven and Italian five? I doubt it. You will soon hear the old murmurs of 'two keels to one.'

But battleships are of subsidiary importance. Mr. Hughes concentrated on them overmuch. It is the light cruisers, the destroyers, the submarines, the aircraft and their auxiliaries that we count most in the future.

France has declared definitely against limitation of these. Britain must follow suit. 'We are not building against Britain,' says M. Briand, 'we are building against X.' That is in the authentic vein of Ministers explaining the old pre-war armament competitions. But its result must be that Britain, too, must build 'against X.'

The naval millennium is off.

M. Briand had another and even deadlier riposte. Mr. Hughes had chosen to disregard France as a naval Power. He could not disregard her as a military Power. But he did want to postpone all military matters until a later stage of the Conference. M. Briand refused to allow this.

He forced the question of land armaments to the front at once. And he did so by another dramatic declaration. France would under no circumstances consent to a reduction of her present military strength — the minimum compatible with her safety.

With perfect timing the French Press — and, of course, the faithful

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Times — told of Germany's preparations for building up her army anew.

'We will not reduce our army,' said M. Briand. 'We dare not, because of the German menace; because also of the Russian menace.'

An incredibly insolent stroke this last. With cool effrontery the French Premier told the Conference that eighteen months ago Russia 'hurled herself against Europe.' Nor did anyone give him the lie or recall the real beginnings of the Russo-Polish war.

German menace. Russian menace. Poor Mr. Hughes found himself caught again in the toils of those tiresome European politics.

He had not invited either Germany or Russia to Washington. Russia, indeed, his Government — thanks to insistent pressure from Mr. Hoover — still obstinately refused to recognize even as a *fact.*

Yet here it was undeniably a fact, and not only a fact but an essential *factor.* Germany, too, was a factor. Poor Mr. Hughes had hoped to get along by ignoring them. Here they were refusing to be ignored.

For the real significance of M. Briand's declaration was that it was idle to talk about military disarmament in Europe unless Germany and Russia were consulted.

There were three courses open. One was to retort to the French Premier by cabling immediate invitations to Moscow and Berlin. That bold stroke might have saved the situation. But it was probably impossible. Anti-German and anti-Russian prejudices are still too strong inside the American Cabinet itself. To invite a Russian delegation would be to recognize the Soviet Government. Mr. Hoover is inflexibly against that. And Mr. Hoover stands for very powerful forces.

The second alternative was to fall in with M. Briand's hint that France might reduce her armies on condition of the renewal of Mr. Wilson's ill-fated project of a Triple Alliance between Britain, America, and France. But no American administration — certainly not that of President Harding — dare entertain such an idea.

The third course was to throw up the sponge and abandon, at any rate for the present, all idea of securing a limitation of European land armaments.

That course Mr. Hughes seems to have taken. The speech in which he accepted M. Briand's position as a reasonable one is an admission of the total failure of his plans.

There still remains the Chinese question. Here it is just possible that Mr. Hughes may have more success.

The Anglo-Japanese alliance is dead, even though not formally abrogated. Japan is isolated; and as a result she is already showing signs of readiness to yield something. *But if she yields it will only be a tactical withdrawal — a retreat, not a capitulation.*

Her strategy in the next few weeks will, I think, be based on two calculations.

First, she will rely on American preoccupation with Shantung. She will give way there, in the hope of saving, by that temporary sacrifice, her privileged position in the rest of China. *She will play the Shantung gambit.*

Second, she will try to alienate China itself from America. The United States has been posing as China's protector against Japanese political penetration. Japan will pose as China's protector against American economic penetration. *She will try for a Yellow Alliance.*

China is asking for the freeing of her Customs from foreign control. She is objecting to the demands of the Four Powers' Financial Consortium for effective control of her railways. She is taking at their face value American

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statements of principle about her 'political and administrative independence,' and is asking that those principles be put into practice in a manner that does not enter into Wall Street's calculations.

What if she gets Japanese backing in this attitude?

American finance aims at an international control of the 'development' of China — quite confident that it would have the dominant voice in any such international scheme. *What if Japan pits against this international control (which would be really American) Chinese control (which would be really Japanese)?*

Either Mr. Hughes will again collapse, and his Conference will break up, content with having given utterance to a few pious generalities about the building of battleships and the relationship of China to foreign Powers; or else we are going to see played at Washington in the next month one of the prettiest and most complicated games of diplomatic intrigue that the world of politics has seen for some years.

If that game *is* played, my money will *not* be on Mr. Hughes. He has revealed himself already as a clumsy fellow. His adversaries are as adroit and experienced as he is raw and clumsy. Also they have the big advantage that the game will not be limited to Washington. It will be played also at Peking. And at Peking the Japanese have a thousand advantages.

In intrigue the Japanese will win. But Mr. Hughes, though he may be an unskillful diplomatist, has behind him the resources and the power of the United States — incomparably the strongest nation in the world to-day.

The Japanese may outwit him. But he may turn the battle from one of Quick Wits into one of Big Sticks. The Roosevelt tradition is not dead.

In which case the Washington Conference may be the prelude to the Pacific war.

Poor sentimental Liberalism!

Poor Mr. Hughes!

Poor President Harding!

They will have to try again, or American Capitalism will find itself in difficulties.

Let me add a postscript.

I have not mentioned Siberia.

Nothing that the Conference may do — or leave undone — with regard to Siberia or to any territory of the Russian or of the Far Eastern Republic, is of the slightest consequence.

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IRISH PREDICTIONS

BY ERSKINE CHILDERS

[The author of this article was secretary of the Sinn Fein Peace Delegation which negotiated the London agreement. He was later one of its bitterest opponents. As we note elsewhere he is an Englishman and a Protestant.]

From the *Outlook, December* 24
(London Conservative Literary Weekly)

Not with any certainty is it easy to forecast the political development of the free Ireland whose birth we hope soon to see. It is not easy because the servitude of Ireland, maintained for so many centuries by methods fraught with such terrible consequences — wars, confiscations, religious persecutions, economic catastrophes, vast emigrations — has so starved, distorted, and retarded the natural and healthy growth of a Gaelic civilization and overlaid it with so deep and tenacious a growth of foreign ideas and institutions that we hardly know ourselves in what directions our free instincts will assert themselves.

We shall have to 'find ourselves,' and a critical world must give us time. It is not as if there had been a peaceful and orderly evolution toward political liberty during which native ideas could find gradual realization and, at the moment of full liberty, come to full fruition. The Legislative Union with England, now in existence for one hundred and twenty years, had the contrary effect. By depriving us of our Parliament, — foreign colonist Parliament as it was, composed of a corrupt and exclusive Protestant clique, the descendants of our own English conquerors, — it nevertheless deprived us of the only Irish organ of government which we possessed and through which we might with better fortune have achieved a national emancipation.

The brains and energies of these men, ill as they replaced the brains and energies of our own expatriated leaders since the terrible wars and confiscations of the seventeenth century, were at any rate more useful than hurtful to Ireland. But the union of 1800 left Ireland without any native organ through which the national will could express itself even for the purpose of averting appalling economic disasters such as the famine of 1846, much less for realizing native political ideas. We were driven back into perpetual agitation, — the worst soil for orderly development, — agitation by violence at home, and by rhetoric and intrigue in a foreign Parliament at London. Much, no doubt, was eventually accomplished after infinite suffering and miseryby these methods — land reform, Church reform, local-government reform; but every social reform bore on the face of it the English stamp — 'made in England' — and many vital social reforms have never been made at all. Attempts at political reform bore the same stamp — Home Rule Bills, drafted by Englishmen upon English models to suit English notions and prejudices, and bristling with safeguards for English interests. It is not too much to say that not a single original Irish idea is to be found in this array of still-born Bills and repealed and inoperative Acts.

The Irish Convention of 1917, though it apparently had a fairly free hand for

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framing an Irish constitution, was in reality fettered by the condition that the Constitution must be 'within the Empire' and must, therefore, conform to certain models.

We are, furthermore, by temperament a conservative nation, like all nations whose chief business is agriculture and whose land is for the most part in the hands of a vast number of small proprietors, or prospective proprietors, as under the recent land-purchase schemes. Though we have hated and resisted anglicization, paradoxically, we tend, by sheer conservatism, to uphold the *fait accompli* and suspect revolutionary schemes. Naturally enough, the counter-current toward revolutionary change comes mainly from a vigorous Labor movement.

One thing is certain, however. We are deeply conscious of our own individuality and of the urgent call to express it in our own way unaided and unobstructed.

How far can we see into the future? One great problem, unsolved as I write, meets us at the outset and governs numerous other problems. Is the organization of the nation to be unitary, or federal, or quasi-federal? The question would never arise — for we are instinctively and traditionally a nation of the unitary type — but for the Ulster difficulty. But it seems certain that an accommodation with the North will necessitate giving a local autonomy to an area in northeast Ulster, with a Legislature having powers similar to those conferred by the British Partition Act. This will involve a quasi-federal organization with an all-Ireland central Parliament at the summit. But I think the nation will be on the whole averse to a logically perfect system of this kind, intended to be permanent, and extending even to further subdivisions of Ireland. There are advocates for a wide distribution of powers among several subordinate provinces, but the advocates for centralization are, I think, in the ascendant. We should regard the quasi-federal policy as a temporary expedient and trust that before long the arguments for complete unity would triumph on their merits. It is useless, on the other hand, to ignore the friction and inconvenience inherent in any imperfect system.

Forecasts as to the ultimate decision are hardly possible, because the decision, it is to be feared, must depend so largely on political exigencies and so little on political science. Yet the decision is vital and the doubt about it reacts on all other forecasts. All one can do in discussing these is to assume at any rate an underlying complete unity for all purposes in the national polity.

A Republic or a Monarchy? Naturally, I believe, the Irish would favor Monarchy, but circumstances render Monarchy impossible. The battle for freedom has been fought under Republican colors, and a Republic, if an absolute freedom of choice is to be respected, we must remain.

We may anticipate no marked departure, for a considerable time at any rate, from the main framework of Parliamentary and electoral institutions as they exist, with infinite minor variations, in the British Empire. Dàil Eireann has been elected on this system and Dàil Eireann has won the national loyalty and affection. We shall maintain a wide suffrage, including women, proportional representation, two Chambers of Parliament, the Upper one less democratic than the Lower, but probably excluding Peers and including direct representatives of economic and cultural interests, while shorn of power to obstruct the Lower House permanently. We shall probably adopt the system known as 'responsible government' — with an executive directly

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dependent on Parliament, not independent of it, as in the United States and Switzerland.

At the same time I think an effort may be made to temper the rigidity of the party system and to better the quality of legislation, by using and improving upon the model of the existing Irish Department of Agriculture, in order to establish for this and other departments advisory committees or councils of experts, chosen by indirect election, with power to criticize estimates and schemes and propose legislative schemes on their own account.

The whole departmental organization, it is certain, will be overhauled from top to bottom. At present it is a chaos of unrelated boards and offices and persons which would be the laughingstock of Europe, if Europe were interested in the matter. Dàil Eireann's present Ministry of Home Affairs would absorb and coördinate many of these, and the Ministry of Land and Agriculture would absorb many more. The other principal Ministries would follow normal lines. A Labor Department would, of course, be included, as at present.

The all-powerful weapon of finance, for the first time in Irish hands, will undoubtedly be used, on the one hand to secure economy in the wasteful administrative chaos that now exists, and on the other to plan with deliberate forethought the building up of the economic and cultural life of the country, hitherto under the overpowering influence of England, on healthy, independent lines. A very large surplus of revenue will be at once available as soon as the exhausting drain to England in the shape of 'tribute' ceases, while millions could be saved on the blunted Police Service now used for our own coercion, but reckoned as an 'Irish' Service in the Treasury accounts.

The control of Customs will, I think, be used judiciously, and with the most jealous regard to the interests of the textile and shipbuilding manufactures of the North, which rely largely on the free import of certain raw materials to give a measure of tariff protection which will enable new and young manufacturing industries, for example those ancillary to agriculture, to gain a foothold, and the industry of agriculture itself to become more stable and self-supporting than it is now. At present it is at the crude and uneconomic stage of exporting live stock, together with butter and bacon.

Finance will probably be used also to foster an Irish merchant marine, now hardly existent, to further scientific industrial education, temperance, and the coöperative movement, and to raise the standard of living for labor.

Education will be endowed with far greater funds, reformed, and made Irish, as well as rationally efficient. At present it is English and thoroughly bad. As far as possible the teaching of the Irish language will be made compulsory; Irish history, instead of being boycotted, will be given first place and a patriotic national outlook inculcated in every department of knowledge. This would not exclude the larger outlook nor limit the range of knowledge. It would certainly involve the encouragement of an admiration of English culture. But it would release children from the curse of being taught to imitate and admire mechanically what is foreign to them, thus drying up the springs of their own original genius. A nation of mimics is not worth a cent.

Public health and the Poor Law will be a great field of reform. The whole rotten fabric of the Poor Law, slavishly copied a century ago from a bad English model, will be swept away. Necessitous people will so far as possible be assisted in their homes instead of in huge prison-like barracks. The separate Poor Law

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authorities will probably be abolished and the county made the sole authority in these and other matters concerning local government.

The main fabric of British law, common and statutory, will be adopted provisionally at the first, subject to amendments already made by the Dàil, and the common law — or most of it — retained, but the system of courts will in all probability be wholly reorganized, somewhat on the lines of the judicial system actually established under the existing Republic in the midst of the war, with locally elected instead of centrally nominated magistrates for minor business, and with a vast simplification and acceleration of procedure, and an elimination of an infinity of red tape.

Defense expenditure will not be large. An aggressive policy would be impossible for us, even if we had a leaning toward it, and, thank God, we have none. Nor could we possibly create a defense which would safeguard us against great naval Powers like England, if they seriously attacked us. We should not be so mad as to attempt armaments designed to meet such attacks. Like all small nations, we should have to rely mainly on the guaranties afforded by international morality for our safety and should be content, for the rest, with a modest army and an air force, a small naval establishment purely for coast defense, and fishery and revenue protection.

It is certain that it will be a cardinal feature of national policy to guard and forward the interests of Labor. Labor has taken a loyal part in the national movement, and one of the signatories to the Declaration of Independence of 1916 was the most brilliant of contemporary Labor leaders, James Connolly. It is foolish to suppose that there will be no controversy. There will be a strong controversy, for Labor and Capital exist here in separate camps, as in all countries. But common action and common interests and common ideals have brought about relations which are more friendly and more disposed for united action than in most countries. It will be felt to be vital that the standard of living should be maintained at a reasonable height, and the fullest consideration be given to the other claims of Labor. One field for development will be that of coöperation.

It is here that we touch upon the great land question of the future. There will be great battles over it, and he would be a bold man who would prophesy the result. But much has been done by Republican effort, even during the present struggle, to solve the greatest of all the questions in our national economy. The main problem is how to settle a numerous and thriving population upon the vast areas of untilled grazing land — 'ranches,' as they are called — and so to put a check upon the emigration which continually drains our country of its strongest young men and women.

One method adopted during the last two years is to give financial aid by loans to groups of landless men or even laborers, organized in coöperative societies, for the purpose of buying estates and paying off the loans by installments. Regular State aid would enormously assist this policy of land settlement, and the principle of coöperation would, it is hoped, be carried further and further into the social life of the settlers.

There will be a school which will go even further and endeavor to modify the principle of the private ownership of land by enforcing the control of the State. It is impossible to foresee the issue of this controversy, but it is quite likely that laws at any rate will be passed to ensure, whether by taxation or otherwise, that the land is used and made fruitful to its fullest extent.

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SUNSET CARES

BY L. DUMONT-WILDEN

From *Revue Bleue, December* 3
(NATIONALIST LITERARY AND POLITICAL SEMI-MONTHLY)

I RECALL the close of a day which I once spent on the seashore during the period of the equinox. Storms had followed storms. The heavens were alternately livid and lurid. Foamy waves already rolled ominously upon the beach. A faint breath of expiring summer was in the air. Night descended. The landscape became indistinct. Fields, trees, and the cottages of the village melted into the dusk. Even the most familiar objects assumed strange and unfamiliar forms in the mysterious dying light. An impressive silence enveloped the land. The leaves rustled, and the troubled gaze of the kine and horses betrayed their instinctive fear. It was to be a terrible night, and only God knew what the morn would bring.

Our old world, torn from its orbit by the war, presents a similar spectacle. We are living in an atmosphere of descending dusk and approaching tempest. Our care-burdened people carry a constant load of foreboding in their hearts, which prevents them from planning ahead. The wealthy have lost confidence in wealth; the poor have suddenly passed from wild hope to passive resignation. We live from day to day intent only on the pleasure of one evening, the art of a single season, the cabinet of a winter. The words of confidence which our ministers pronounce at stated intervals, and which our official press registers with solemn dignity, ring as false as the encouraging platitudes which we murmur at the bedside of dying friends.

Guglielmo Ferrero has just made a progress through Europe, delivering a lecture of gloomy pessimism wherein he describes with the eloquence of an imaginative historian all the *stigmata* of decadence which our civilization reveals. Pessimism is always bad hygiene. We should rather emphasize the fact that symptoms of decadence are often forerunners of renaissance, and that though we may not see the new world which is forming, we are, none the less, its artisans. At least this much is certain: we are obviously on the eve of profound changes in both the political and the social order. Possibly the Great War is but the first act of an historical drama comparable to the end of the ancient world.

People fooled themselves in thinking that the Treaty of Versailles and the other treaties which followed it would end the great international mêlée in which we have been engaged and mark the beginning of a new period of order. We see more clearly with every passing moment that this is false. Since that pleasant summer evening when Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Wilson emerged from the palace at Versailles, arm in arm, acclaimed enthusiastically by a delirious crowd as the pacifiers of the world, cause after cause for war has risen on every side, and if peace still nominally prevails, it is solely because the exhausted nations cannot yet summon energy to face the misery and the risks of a new conflict. It would seem that our governments, great and little, lack courage either to make peace or to make war. So we are living in a sort of

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intermediary state of disquiet, solicitude, and misery.

Hope revived somewhat with the opening of the Washington Conference, although the official optimism which accompanied that event has not been shared seriously by the common people, at least in our old Europe. . . . For what mainly characterizes our present crisis is the inability of our statesmen to agree upon the political order which they wish to impose upon the world, or to exercise effectively the hegemony of which some dream without confessing it. The United States desires peace and order, but refuses to shoulder the burden of enforcing them. In this it is unquestionably remiss. And has England, which seemed the best situated to profit by its victory when the armistice was made, succeeded better? Those who direct the policy of the Empire dreamed of great things. The United Kingdom was finally rid of its great rival, Germany. Lloyd George had manœuvred shrewdly, with the more or less unconscious aid of President Wilson, to leave Germany strong enough, or at least intimidating enough, to prevent French supremacy on the Continent. In the Far East, Great Britain seemed to have assured its control by making two client governments the heirs of the Ottoman empire — Greece on one side and a new Arab state upon the other. Its supremacy was further fortified on the west by the British fleet, mistress of the Dardanelles, and on the east by a protectorate over Persia. Most becomingly this imperial edifice bore a beautiful moral motto: Protection for the Christians of the Near East.

But this grandiose scheme left out of account certain powerful factors. The Turks, whose patriotism and resolution were underestimated, had not been disarmed by the improvised armistice of Admiral Calthorpe. When British troops occupied Constantinople they rallied all the active and effective elements of the Ottoman world in opposition to themselves. Chiefs seized power who, having nothing to lose, became irreconcilable enemies of the whole Western world, and of England in particular. Britain was unable to maintain its sovereignty in the Caucasus, because public opinion at home demanded the recall of her troops. Her far-flung schemes in Persia came to naught because local patriots received sufficient support from Moscow to shake off the foreign yoke. The great Arab empire has shrunk to the little kingdom of Faisul, who, furthermore, is already considered by most orthodox Mussulmans as a renegade. The empire of Greater Greece proved but a daydream. It has crumbled along the Sakaria river in Asia Minor, and English prestige has rapidly waned at Athens. So British policy in the Near East has borne but the Dead Sea fruit of Mussulman hatred which, spreading to India, has multiplied the embarrassments of the imperial government.

. . . . . .

What was the French plan for the reorganization of the world? It involved in the Near East the liberation of real nationalities and the protection of minorities; but it respected the nationality of the Turks and favored retaining the Sultan as caliph at Constantinople. In Central Europe it sought to liberate the oppressed nationalities, to create a Poland strong enough to form a barrier against Bolshevism, and a counterweight for Germany; and the organization of an entente among the succession states of the former Austrian monarchy. In Western Europe it sought to protect our country's frontier by erecting a buffer state along the Rhine under the protection of France and Belgium. This

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was a simple and logical plan, which would have reëstablished the balance of power in Europe. History will mourn its failure.

Why then did it fail? Because France, weakened and ruined by a war which fell heavier upon her than any of her allies, was compelled to concentrate her energy upon obtaining reparation for the damages she had suffered from her vanquished enemy, and upon guaranteeing a stable peace. In this perfectly legitimate effort she has not received the support from her allies which she had the right to expect.

The threat of Germany continues to dominate world policy. A military threat? No. For the time being and for many years to come, Germany will probably be unable to risk a war of revenge. But that country is an economic menace which can precipitate us into an untold catastrophe.

From the moment the Treaty of Versailles was signed, the Germans declared that it could not be executed. This was equivalent to saying that they would do all in their power to prevent its enforcement, and above all that they would evade compliance with its economic provisions; that is, they would not pay the reparation therein provided. So far, we must confess, they have succeeded fairly well. Every time that the Allies have met to study ways and means for collecting their bills, the meeting has ended by reducing the sum to be collected or postponing its payment.

. . . . . .

And now where are we? All those who have observed what is occurring beyond the Rhine, expected Germany to declare that she was unable to fulfill her obligations. The prospect has been discussed openly in political and financial circles at Berlin. Great industrialists like Hugo Stinnes are reported to be urging the German government to refuse payment. If we threaten to occupy the Ruhr, these people shrug their shoulders and say: 'Go ahead! What do we care?' . . . 'With incomprehensible pessimism,' to quote one of their own leading editors, 'they consider the insolvency of Germany as an inevitable misfortune. They recognize that this insolvency may end in military occupation and economic tutelage, that it may cause the political disruption of the country; but they imagine that in the midst of that collapse German industry at least will remain intact. They think that their great trusts and amalgamations may in time form the nucleus for a new political organism. Consequently, they preach a policy of catastrophe, the results of which could benefit no one unless it be these magnates of the trusts.'

The philosophy of history has always been sedulously cultivated in Germany. Possibly her captains of industry have persuaded themselves with undue confidence that they would emerge, as the great landed nobility emerged from the anarchy of the ninth century, masters of the domains that surround their castles and the centres of a new social order.

Be this as it may, Germany, according to all reports, is becoming reconciled to the idea of national bankruptcy. It is the psychology of the Chinese debtor, who hangs himself in revenge before the door of his creditor. Absurd as the idea may be, still we must not forget that we saw the positive, practical, efficient Germany of 1914 commit an act of madness. We and our allies must be prepared to face the possibility of Germany's bankruptcy, and the breakdown of her government. It is time to be up and active. For one bankruptcy will be followed by another, and all civilized Europe may be plunged into universal insolvency.

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ON THE EVE OF THE TRAGEDY. V

BY RAYMOND RECOULY

From *La Revue de France, December* 15
(PARIS LITERARY AND POLITICAL SEMI-MONTHLY)

JOURNALISTS make a distinction between good and bad deaths. The first are those of people who die on a day and at an hour when the newspapers are at leisure to bury them comfortably — that is to give them an adequate obituary. The bad deaths are those of people who pass off suddenly and unexpectedly, when you have to get together an appropriate death notice on the spur of the moment.

Francis Joseph, the old Emperor of Austria, would have made an excellent death; every newspaper man in Paris had a big portfolio of 'dope' prepared for his demise. But with his nephew, Francis Ferdinand, the case was exactly the opposite. When he was assassinated on a fine Sunday morning in June 1914, his brusque departure from the stage of life put most of the journalists of the world in a most embarrassing position.

The author of these lines had profited by the magnificent morning to take an automobile ride to the forest of Compiègne. When he reached home that evening, and was just finishing dinner, intent upon but one thing — getting to bed, the *concierge* called to say: 'Ah! sir, they have been hunting all over Paris for you; at your club, your restaurant, and at the homes of your friends. Someone has been assassinated in Austria, and you are wanted immediately at the *Figaro* office.' Grumbling and cursing my fate, I called a taxi and hastened to the office, to spend a good part of the night placing armfuls of phrases on the tomb of the defunct archduke. For the moment, his assassination was merely a troublesome addition to my labors; nothing more. For two or three weeks afterward that was the only impression that remained. The gentlemen at Vienna and Berlin were plotting their mischief in profound secrecy. It was a secret most excellently guarded.

Long afterward, the diplomatic collections of all colors of the rainbow, issued by the different governments, recorded warnings of war from that period. But these were merely isolated voices, to which no one paid much attention at the time. We have a proof of this in the fact that European diplomats were quite generally away on their vacation when the ultimatum to Serbia burst upon us. Our own President and our Premier were on a visit to St. Petersburg.

In fact the first disturbing rumors began to arrive between the 12th and 15th of July. They did not come from the government nor from diplomats; but from financial circles, which are almost always the first to learn important news and are the most accurately informed. My colleague Louis Aubert, financial editor of *Figaro*, drew me aside one evening to say: 'We are receiving very alarming reports from Vienna and Budapest. Their stock exchanges are in bad shape. Everyone is selling at any price. It looks as though the note which is to be sent to Belgrade will be pretty stiff, no matter what the gentlemen at our Foreign Office say. It will be made as humiliating as possible, and perhaps provoke a war.'

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During the next few days I received the same caution from another source; this time from Germany, where stocks and bonds were falling as if at the order of the government.

I spent the following Sunday, July 19, at the home of Princess M——. The ambassador of Austria-Hungary was there. After dinner we went to see an evening fête on the Grand Canal at Versailles. At its conclusion the ambassador kindly offered to take me back to Paris in his carriage. He set me down at the *Figaro* office. The ambassador was a tall, thin man, and one of the things he prided himself most upon, and boasted of, was his ability as ambassador to wear the same Hungarian magnate uniform that he wore when he was a young attaché. He was a man of few words. He was not a ready conversationalist, and the reason he talked so little is, I fear, that he had very little to say. However, that was a common trait among Austrian diplomats. The English say of such people, 'He falls short.' So our conversation was interrupted by frequent silences, and it required agile questioning to keep him talking.

As you may well believe, I plied the ambassador incessantly with questions. I used every device I could to draw out information. I told him the pessimistic reports which our financiers were receiving. He said they were absolutely false. He asserted that the Austrian note, the details of which he did not know, would certainly contain nothing which Serbia could not grant or which would offend the country's dignity. 'Never at any time,' he said to me, 'have we dreamed of making excessive demands of Belgrade. What we ask will be just and reasonable. I hope that every cabinet, and particularly the cabinet of France, will help us obtain satisfaction.'

Was the honorable ambassador lying, justifying again that admirable English definition of a diplomat: 'A gentlemen appointed to lie abroad'? Or was he ignorant of what was being prepared?

We are not entitled to reject the second hypothesis *a priori*. It is very possible that the government at Vienna was so anxious to guard its secret, and to strike out of the blue, that it left its agents abroad in ignorance of its intentions. Reassured by these statements as well as by the departure of President Poincaré and Premier Viviani, who had left for Kronstadt, I spent a quiet evening.

Friday morning, July 24, the ultimatum burst upon us like a bolt of lightning. At once every person who had followed European politics for the last ten years asked this single question: Is Germany backing Austria? If she was not, the thing would be accommodated easily. It was not the first time that Austria had tried to start trouble in Eastern Europe. On each previous occasion the Berlin government had held her back. But if she was supported or encouraged by Germany, peace was in imminent peril.

The next morning we had an answer to the question. The public was startled to receive the news of a serious proposal which the German ambassador submitted to the acting head of the French Ministry, M. Bienvenu-Martin. The latter gentleman was not prepared by his previous study and experience to receive a communication of that nature. The ambassador of Germany, after reading a long note which he refused to permit to be copied, but which he read a second time to our acting premier, called the attention of M. Bienvenu-Martin to one sentence, which he said contained the substance of the whole: 'The German government, believing that the present question concerns solely Austria-Hungary and Serbia, ardently desires the localization of

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the conflict, since intervention by another Power would under the normal terms of its alliances provoke incalculable consequences.'

Early that morning I telephoned to the German ambassador. Some time before Baron von Schoen, the ambassador, whom I met socially, had related to me an incident which seemed to preoccupy him greatly. Some of our press men had threatened to expel on their own hook — to 'kick out' as they called it — certain German correspondents whom they considered undesirable characters. The ambassador asked my opinion, adding that he might be obliged to lodge a complaint with the Foreign Office. I replied: 'Why make such a big fuss about so trifling a matter? It does n't deserve it. Why not arrange it quietly without troubling the government. I think it can be done easily enough. When our two countries are at peace there is no good reason for disturbing their present relations with such trifles.'

Soon after this conversation I met Baron von Schoen at a garden party at the Presidential Palace. He drew me aside and said: 'I followed your advice and the thing is settled. If you want information at any time don't hesitate to call on me.'

Believing that the time had come to profit by this privilege, I asked if I might call that morning. The secretary answered me at first that the ambassador was so busy that he would not be able to receive me. I still pressed the matter, and finally I was told I could call about eleven.

I did not find Baron von Schoen in the little office on the ground floor of the old Hotel Beauharnais where he ordinarily received; but in a tiny private office on the first floor next to the chancellery. Baron von Schoen was just the opposite of Count Szecsen, the Austrian ambassador. He was short, plump, of ruddy complexion, and of ready speech — a man profuse in professions and promises. When for any reason he wished to avoid coming to the point of a question, he buried it under a mountain of words and gestures. That was his favorite device. It was one that he used this morning.

'Well! well!' he exclaimed, as soon as he saw me. 'Do you suppose that two great countries like ours are going to risk cutting each other's throats for the Serbs, and for a Balkan squabble that interests neither of us directly? That would be horrible, frightful! We must prevent that at any cost!' And he went on in this manner at a great rate.

That was all very fine. But I tried to pin him down at once to the true source of the Austrian note, the only really interesting point. I asked him how the German government had permitted its ally to send Belgrade such a terrible document which threatened to burn all bridges behind it.

'We know absolutely nothing about it,' he declared with vigor. 'I can give you my word; Austria never consulted us in the slightest. We are forced to admit that she has justice on her side and to back her up. She wants the end once for all with these Serb provocations which render her existence intolerable. The only thing to do is to let the two countries settle their own affairs between them. Intervention by a third nation will provoke the most frightful results.'

Having said this the ambassador would not commit himself further. I vainly tried to make him see that a presentation of the case was altogether too simple. I said: —

'If Austria wants to crush Serbia, to destroy her independence and thus to upset the equilibrium of Eastern Europe, how can Russia remain passive?'

The ambassador kept returning to his first position, which was to be the

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leitmotiv of the German diplomacy during the negotiations which followed. 'We cannot,' he repeated obstinately, 'interfere with Austria, who is quite right in wanting to punish Serbia.'

Except for this statement I could get nothing out of him but parrot-like formulas and insincere professions. Consequently, I left the Embassy in the bluest of moods. I was even more impressed by the appearance of the Embassy itself than by the ambassador's statements. On the stairs, in the corridors, and in the vestibule, servants were packing goods and nailing up cases. It looked as if the entire establishment was on the point of moving.

I hastened away to convey my impressions to my friends at the Foreign Office. I found them much preoccupied and disposed to see the dark side. Before dinner I dropped into the *Temps* office, where I met René Puaux, who shared my apprehensions, and we went at once to order uniforms, expecting to be summoned shortly to the colors. It was a happy thought. The uniforms we ordered that day were finished the very morning we left for the front. We had to go personally to get them at the house of the workman who sewed them, way out nearly to the old *barrière du Trône*.

Our newspapers, after their first shock, were in some cases inclined to think the affair would blow over like other Balkan controversies, of which we had had a surfeit during the last fifteen or twenty years. People asked: Why can't the same thing happen again that has happened so many times before? We had to explain at length to these optimists that the situation was quite different now, that the Great Powers were involved. If it had been a Balkan question, it would soon have been relegated to the last page of the newspapers, especially now, in the midst of Mme. Caillaux's trial. But deep interests were at stake; that was why the topic was filling the first page — where, unhappily, it was to remain for a long time to come.

As I was leaving the Foreign Office about seven o'clock on Saturday night, I caught a glimpse of the tall form of Lord Bertie, the British ambassador, in the distance. He was just turning off from Bridge Alexander III; cane in hand, silk hat tipped slightly back, in walking clothes, very chic, very robust, florid — strolling leisurely toward the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I directed my course so as to meet him, and we conversed for a few moments on the sidewalk.

'A detestable affair,' he said, 'because, as we English see it, it starts from a dangerous source.' Then half-seriously, half-jokingly, in a manner very characteristic of him, he added: 'Do you trust the Russians? We have only halfway faith in them. . . . I'll say the same of the Serbs. That's why it will be hard to make my country interfere in a quarrel which concerns only the Serbs and the Russians.'

'Wait a moment,' I said. 'I fear many other nations — we, for example — may find ourselves immediately involved.'

'In that case,' he replied, 'the situation will be quite different,' and rapping his cane on the sidewalk, and straightening up to his full height, he continued his stroll toward the Quai d'Orsay.

The following days were very remarkable. When I recall them now, as I do continually, they seem to have been as short as seconds and as long as centuries.

I spent my late mornings and afternoons at the office of the *Temps*, to pick up its latest reports, at the Foreign Office, and for the first day or so at the *Palais de Justice*, where the trial of Mme. Caillaux was dragging on. About six every night I went to the *Figaro*,

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where, except for a short interval at dinner, I remained until two or three o'clock in the morning. My mind dwelt on the fearful possibility of war until I ended by convincing myself that such a thing could not possibly occur. Then followed a new state of mind which suddenly overwhelmed all of us. We had the sensation of being locked in a cage, from which it was impossible to escape.

The abrupt change from the editorial office, or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where news grew worse from hour to hour, to the court room where Mme. Caillaux was being tried, was most painful. On the twenty-eighth, Tuesday, she was finally most scandalously acquitted. We were plunging headlong, as every sign indicated, toward a great foreign war. But in the court room the atmosphere of a civil war prevailed. Men's eyes flashed hatred at each other. There were violent interchanges between the friends of Calmette and the friends of Caillaux. In order to strengthen the latter, Ceccaldi and his henchmen had packed the court room with ugly customers, ready to use their fists at the slightest provocation. Their deep muttering of approbation was audible every time a witness testified in favor of the accused. A tempest was in the air. We expected at any moment to see the two sides come to blows.

Mme. Caillaux's acquittal on Tuesday evening produced an immense impression. The boulevards were black with pedestrians, who eagerly bought each successive edition as it appeared. When I arrived at the *Figaro* office after dinner, the building was crowded with writers, society people, financiers, actors, and actresses. However, that was the case almost every evening. People had acquired the habit of visiting the Rue Drouot as they did the theatre. It was in this excited atmosphere, pushing through crowded passageways and amidst the slamming of doors and the constant ringing of the telephone, that I had to collect my impressions of the day and to write my articles.

These impressions were rapidly growing worse. On Wednesday, the twenty-ninth, late in the forenoon, President Poincaré and M. Viviani returned. They were wildly applauded on their way from the station. It was as though the suppressed emotion of the people had suddenly burst forth.

That evening, after leaving the Quai d'Orsay, I went at once to the War Office, where I had a moment's interview with M. Messimy, who told me of Baron von Schoen's disquieting call upon Viviani. Our government, in view of Germany's military preparations, of which we were receiving such alarming reports with every passing hour, would be forced to take similar measures the next day; in fact to mobilize its covering troops.

The next morning, Thursday, the thirtieth, was an exciting time. One sensation followed close upon another. First came word that Austria had begun hostilities by bombarding Belgrade. The German ambassador at St. Petersburg, Pourtales, had used most threatening language to Sasonof. The previous night Wilhelm II had sent a threatening telegram to the Tsar. Germany's military preparations were more definitely known. As these alarming reports followed in quick succession, the cabinet, at the insistence of General Joffre and M. Messimy, decided at last to authorize, subject to important qualifications, that our covering troops take their positions.

Suddenly, after this black morning, a wave of optimism swept through Paris the same afternoon; starting in political circles, which received their inspiration from the Minister of the Interior, followed by financial circles. Men who were either well informed or

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professed to be so, telephoned each other the most reassuring reports. The situation, they said, was considerably better. Diplomatic conversations had begun; there was hope of preserving peace.

What was the course of this optimism? It was not absolutely vague. Pourtales had called on Sasonof, and in the course of the interview the Russian Foreign Minister proposed to the German ambassador a clever formula for conciliation; and almost simultaneously relations were resumed between St. Petersburg and Vienna. It was but a step from this to the assumption that everything would be settled amicably. But we were somewhat premature in our joy.

About four or five in the afternoon, while on my way to the Foreign Office, it occurred to me to step into the lobby of the Chamber of Deputies. As soon as one of my colleagues, the political editor of a very important Paris daily, discovered me, he took me vigorously to task for my morning article, which was in his opinion much too pessimistic.

'How can you delude people like that,' he said, 'when all our reports indicate that the situation is growing better hourly?'

I asked him what these reports were, and what their source.

'One of the most important members of the government,' he replied, 'M. Malvy. There he is now. You just ask him yourself.'

In fact I just then saw M. Malvy talking with great animation to a group of journalists in the court of the Palais Bourbon. I drew near and listened intently. M. Malvy explained that the latest telegrams afforded grounds for hope; that conversations had begun between St. Petersburg and Berlin and between St. Petersburg and Vienna. 'When the diplomats begin to talk,' he continued, 'we may hope for a settlement.'

Decidedly impressed by this definite assurance I hastened to the Foreign Office. Calling upon the chief of the Press Bureau I asked him if he agreed with M. Malvy.

'Not the least in the world,' he answered. 'There was, in fact, a very feeble ray of hope which glimmered just a moment but was immediately extinguished by later war threats. Come down to the Minister's office with me. We'll see if there are any new telegrams.'

I followed him to the ground floor. In a few minutes he came back excited, and said: 'Jules Cambon telegraphs that the *Lokal Anzeiger*, an official newspaper, has issued a special edition announcing a general mobilization in Germany. The German government has denied this report, but our ambassador does not credit the denial. He says that what is not true to-day will unquestionably be true to-morrow.'

It was quite clear that M. Malvy's optimism was not based on solid facts. Indeed, that very evening, according to the information given me at the War Office, the news kept growing worse. German troops were barricading roads crossing the frontier, and seizing French automobiles. The prefect at Nancy reported the first violation of the frontier by a German cavalry picket, at the point where the Marne canal to the Rhine crosses our border.

That evening the crowd at the *Figaro* office was even larger than usual. Each one naturally brought his own rumors and expressed his opinion. Some optimists were still clinging to the hopes of the afternoon. They assured us that this rattling of arms meant nothing, and that the diplomats would settle things in the end.

Such idle chatter was interesting enough, but not much use to a man who had to write an article of a column and a half before midnight. I shut myself

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up in one of the empty offices on the second floor and locked the door in order to work in peace. About eleven o'clock someone rapped and shouted: 'Henri de Rothschild is downstairs. He dined with a man of high rank at the Foreign Office, who assured him that we shall have war in a few days, if not in a few hours.'

A little later a lady, who they told me had vainly tried to telephone me all the evening, asked whether she should cancel an automobile trip which she was planning to make to Belgium the following week. 'Don't hesitate to cancel your trip,' I replied, 'and if you must go some place in your automobile, and the military authorities permit you to do so, choose the route to Biarritz or Marseilles. That will be safer.'

The next day, Friday, the thirty-first, Jaurès was assassinated. Late in the afternoon I went to the Foreign Office, where I saw Premier Viviani. The German ambassador had just left his office. Baron von Schoen had come to report that a 'state of danger of war' had been proclaimed in Germany, and to say also that his government demanded that the Russian government demobilize within twelve hours. If she failed to do so Germany would also mobilize. As if all these threats were not sufficient, he wished in conclusion to know what attitude France would take in case of war between Germany and Russia, adding that he would come for an answer the next day, Saturday, at one o'clock. He likewise requested the Premier to present his respects to the President of the Republic, thus indicating clearly that this visit might be his last.

I found M. Viviani greatly moved, but wholly master of himself, and confident. All the reports which reached him from the working classes, he said, even the most radical, were excellent. A delegation of railway men assured him that the railway unions would declare anyone who tried to retard the preparations for mobilization a traitor to the country.

Under such conditions the assassination of Jaurès, deplorable as it certainly was, would not have serious consequences for the nation. I told several of my colleagues this when I got back to my paper. They were greatly disturbed, anticipating serious disorders that evening. For my part I was confident that their fears were groundless. In the midst of the formidable events which were impending, I said, what does the death of a single man, no matter how prominent, amount to? In a few hours, or a few weeks at most, hundreds of thousands of men will be slaughtered.

To tell the truth, there was a feeble effort to start trouble. Some small groups of Socialists tried to march down the boulevards from the heights of Montmartre; but their processions and cheers were literally smothered in the wave of patriotic enthusiasm and emotion which surged through Paris.

About midnight we received a telephone message from Stephen Pichon, of the *Petit Journal*. That former Foreign Minister was sending us the proofs of his article for the following morning, in which he declared that war was imminent, and summoned all Frenchmen to rally to the defense of their country. We were in complete agreement; we saw the situation in the same light. We printed the most important passages of his article on our front page.

When I left the office of the paper with a friend, about one o'clock in the morning, we heard the resounding clatter of cavalry moving down the Boulevard Montmartre. Cafés were closing, but many people were still on the streets. The hoof beats drew nearer; someone shouted, 'They are cuiras-

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siers!' Suddenly it was as if an electric shock passed through the crowd. Windows opened in every story, people stood on the chairs and tables of the cafés. A heavy taxi driver climbed laboriously to the top of his vehicle. A moment later the cavalry appeared, preceded by a throng of children and young people. The men were in field equipment, their helmets covered, their long overcoats making them seem like giants in the semi-obscurity. They occupied the whole width of the boulevard. A rolling thunder of voices shouting: *Vive la France! Vive l'Armée!* greeted their appearance. The big chauffeur on his vehicle seemed beside himself. He shouted louder than the others, waved his cap in the air, and swung his arms like a windmill.

Turning to my friend I said: 'You see what even the assassination of Jaurès amounts to in an hour like this.'

Germany now had things in her own hand, and she was playing her cards rapidly. On Friday, the thirty-first, she sent a veritable ultimatum to St. Petersburg, demanding a reply within twelve hours. Since Russia could not commit suicide by yielding, Germany's mobilization, which was equivalent to war, was certain. Moreover, Germany had been mobilizing for several days. France would soon be forced to do the same.

About one o'clock the next day — Saturday, August the first — I went to the War Office. I knew that General Joffre was urging with all his power immediate mobilization. I was told that he had sent M. Messimy that morning an exceedingly strong note, and had even threatened to resign if his advice was not at once accepted. More than that, he had accompanied the Minister of War to the important cabinet meeting then in session at the Presidential Palace.

I went directly from the Rue Saint-Dominique to the *Temps* office. A telephone message arrived, saying that mobilization would be ordered by four o'clock that afternoon. I returned to the *Temps* office about half-past three. People were awaiting with impatience and anxiety the important news. A little after four o'clock a messenger boy, who was watching in front of the postal station in the Boulevard des Italiens, rushed into the general manager's office, shouting: 'It's posted!'

I hastened out. A crowd had gathered in front of one of the windows of the office, where a little blue paper was pasted; the same sort that we use for telegrams.

As soon as one person had read it he yielded his place to others. On the little paper was written with a pen these simple but fateful words: '*Order of utmost urgency. General mobilization of our forces by land and sea. Sunday, August 2, first day of mobilization!*'

That was all.

Great manifestations followed. Processions marched up and down the boulevards and innumerable crowds gathered in the Place de la Concorde. President Poincaré said in his message: 'Mobilization is not war.' To tell the truth, no one believed him. If it was not war, it was certainly something terribly near to it.

While we were waiting after dinner, at the Foreign Office, we saw M. Isvolsky, the Russian ambassador, come in. He had scarcely entered the waiting-room when he said to us in a voice moved by emotion: 'Germany has just declared war upon us. I received the telegram a moment ago from St. Petersburg.'

One of our party said: 'It will be our turn to-morrow.'

It did not come to-morrow, however, but the day following. The only reason for the delay was that Germany did not

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know what pretext to give for declaring war upon us.

On Monday, August 3, while I was arranging my affairs to join my regiment, consider my surprise, I can even say my stupefaction, at receiving the following letter from Count Szecsen, the ambassador of Austria-Hungary.[1]

August 3, 1914.

EMBASSY OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
57, rue de Varenne

MY DEAR MR. RECOULY, —

A very pertinent paragraph in to-day's *Figaro* cautions against believing false reports.

Unhappily there are many such, among others that printed in several journals to the effect that our troops began the bombardment of Belgrade, an unfortified city (which is untrue).

I hope I can count upon the well-known impartiality of *Figaro* in asking you to publish in the next number of your journal, the corrections which I enclose with this.

Thanking you in advance, I beg you to believe me,

Yours very truly
SZECSEN.

The enclosed note reads as follows: —

The reports appearing in all the newspapers, that it was Austro-Hungarian troops who began the bombardment of Belgrade, are not true.

Serbian troops installed in the houses of Belgrade opened fire upon Austro-Hungarian merchant vessels, killing a captain and several other persons, and wounding a certain number, which forced the troops of the Emperor and King to reply to this attack.

It was, one will admit, a very strange letter.

Austro-Hungarian monitors had been bombarding Belgrade since July 30. Now, four days later, after Germany had already declared war on Russia, and was about to declare war on France, the ambassador of Austria-Hungary was busying himself with a denial of this bombardment. Things of infinitely greater importance were then at stake.

How are we to explain this curious state of mind? Unquestionably, it was largely due either to the candor or to the stupidity of Austrian diplomacy. The latter government, after having frivolously and foolishly taken steps which led to war, was now being led by Germany, following that country on a path which it could not retrace. Austria-Hungary was already out of the game. She seemed unable to comprehend the situation. She was still preoccupied solely with her little controversy with Serbia; quite unaware that her acts had started an incomparably greater conflict.

Count Szecsen seemed unable to realize what a national war meant in a great democracy like France. He did not comprehend that the whole nation, soldiers and civilians, rich and poor, old and young, were swept into the great current of events. He looked at the war through the eyes of a contemporary and courtier of Maria Theresa.

This is so true, that during the week which followed, the noble ambassador, quite unconscious of his real position, and with a lack of tact which fairly startles one, continued to dine at the Union Club. He did this until the club authorities were obliged to ask him to cease his visits for fear of provoking disagreeable incidents.

Frivolity and lack of comprehension on Austria's part, criminal premeditation on Germany's part! The latter country, willing war, pounced upon its opportunity and did not let it go. The whole origin of the drama is condensed in those few words.

[1] This letter in the ambassador's own hand is reproduced in facsimile, in the original article. — EDITOR.

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FOREST LOVE

BY MORAY DALTON

From the *Cornhill Magazine, December*
(ENGLISH LITERARY MONTHLY)

IT was rather a treeless country. The lower slopes of the great semicircular sweep of hills were sparsely wooded with scrub oak and hazel and hawthorn, but their crests were bare. The valley enclosed was marshy, partly flooded in winter, and in summer intersected by streams where kingcups grew, and reed warblers built their nests among the sedge. The shepherds who sometimes brought their flocks along the ridge saw nothing there but moving cloud shadows passing across the shallow pools, and the lush grasses stirred by the wind. There had been old tales, told by winter fires, of strange elfin laughter mingling with the notes of birds in springtime in the hangers, of strange elusive shapes that flitted behind the fluttering screen of leaves in the undergrowth, or raced over the low-lying pastures; but they were half forgotten. The few men who passed that way were incurious, or their eyes were held, so that the centaur herd grazed there undisturbed, while the fauns grew so bold that they even mingled with the flocks and milked the ewes.

When Laon was born his mother washed him in the nearest stream, and then carried him back to the shelter she had contrived on the sunny side of an uprooted thorn. She had scooped a shallow hole in the hard chalky soil and lined it with moss and leaves, and here Laon slept at night, curled up in the warm hollow between her breast and her knees, while during the day he went about with her, riding on her hip, or clinging like a burr to the swinging curtain of her hair.

He was pretty even when he was only a few days old, with his little pointed ears pricking up from a round head covered with soft black down, and his goat's legs, which, at first, were very thick at the joints and as pathetically weak and wobbly as those of a newly dropped kid. But he soon learned to fend for himself. His mother weaned him when he was able to run and climb, and soon after she found a lover and went away with him, having lost interest in the child of a former mating. Laon scarcely noticed her going. He was too busy getting enough to eat. Later he would need very little food, but while he was growing he was always hungry, always scrambling for roots and berries and robbing the bees and the squirrels of their hoards. He saw little of the others of his own kind. They came of another stock more brutish and uncouth, and were more shy of him than of the purblind shepherds, hiding from him during the day so that he never caught more than a glimpse of furry bodies just vanishing behind a tree trunk or little swinish eyes that peered through a tangle of briars.

The valley with its rich pastures was a favorite grazing ground for the centaur herds, but they were as uncertain as the wind in their comings and goings, and Laon was nearly full-grown when, one spring morning, as he was lying on the bank of a stream watching the min-

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nows, a shadow passed over him, and raising his head he saw two young colts who had come to drink. He sat up and stared at them and they gazed back at him. After a little hesitation he made friendly noises, and they responded at once. Before very long they were playing together. Laon learned that they were brothers, and that the elder was named Lycidas, and the other Medon. Lycidas was very gentle in his ways. He had a passion for flowers and would spend hours picking them and weaving them into garlands. Medon was rougher and more inclined to be restless. They were both very kind to the little faun, and he spent all that summer in the company of these, his first playmates. Sometimes they would gallop for miles across the marshes, with Laon between them, holding by their manes, his hoofs scarcely touching the ground, while the flocks of wild fowl that lived among the brackish pools and inlets of the coast rose as they passed. Sometimes they went down to the sea itself and swam out through the breakers into deep water. Hot midsummer days they spent on the hills, lying on the thyme-scented turf, Lycidas patiently stringing chains of harebells that wilted before he had finished them, while his brother and Laon amused themselves by trying to catch the laden bees as they went by, flying low, on their way to the hive.

The older members of the centaur herd stayed below in the valley. After a brief period of coltish playfulness they had settled down to a rather languid and somnolent maturity. They had been famed for their wisdom and their strength, but that was long ago. Their numbers were dwindling. When their time came they went away by themselves to die. The mother of Lycidas had left them soon after the birth of his younger brother, and there had been no young ones since. Presently, when they were all gone, the race of centaurs would be extinct on the earth, for these were the last of all. Lycidas told the faun this one afternoon when they were lying together on the ridge. He could not explain what dying was; he only knew that it meant leaving the herd and never coming back. He did not care to think about it. It was like remembering last winter, or the bad country where there was no grass. He spoke sadly. It was the fault, he said, of the fire-makers, who were spreading over all the land and ousting the people of the hills and the forests who were there before them.

Laon listened, only half understanding, and presently the centaur rose and shook himself and called to his brother. The sun had set, and the rooks were flying home by twos and threes, black specks against the clear golden pallor of the sky. It was time for a gallop. Laon came between them, with an arm over the back of each, and they tore off at a breakneck pace, thundering along the ridge.

Time passed; the bracken on the hills changed color and the berries on the brambles ripened. The sun lost some of its heat, and a white mist hung about the marshes. The two young centaurs came up the hill at last to tell their friend that the herd was leaving. He looked up at them as they stood before him. He had only a few sounds at his command to express all that he felt. He did not ask them if they would return, and if he had they could only have answered him vaguely. They had hugged and pummeled one another often in their play, but they did not attempt an embrace at parting. The brothers turned and went down the hill again. Laon watched them until they were lost to sight in the gathering dusk, and then crept into his burrow and lay there, face downwards. That night,

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for the first time in his life, he cried himself to sleep. When he woke at daybreak a fine rain was falling, and all the world was gray. He looked down the valley, and saw that the herd was gone.

That winter was very wet and sunless, and morning after morning the little faun was awakened by the pattering of raindrops on his face. The early spring was colder than the winter had been, with a bitter wind that shriveled the young buds on the trees, and Laon found a celandine in flower, the first of the year, and rescued a heron from being frozen in one of the marsh streams on the same day. The bird had been trying to fish in the partly thawed water, and the ice, re-forming, had caught the tip of one long gray wing. It was lying motionless, exhausted by its previous struggles, when Laon found it, and it lay for a few minutes in his arms after he had released it. When, presently, it fluttered away he looked after it wistfully. Night had fallen when he climbed the hill again.

Something loomed before him, a shadow among shadows. By putting out his hand he could have touched it if he had dared. Something uttered a sound as of laughter and spoke in a great voice, but in the tongue that Laon understood.

'There is more to be learned than my poor followers can teach you. Why did your mother take one of Adam's race for her lover? You will have to choose. It is time to be gone from here, little one. If, later, you return to me, you will be welcome.'

There was a profound silence when the voice ceased. It was as though every living thing on the hillside held its breath. There was silence while the Thing passed, like a cloud across the moon, over the marshes, until at last there came an echo of its laughter, very faint and very far away.

Laon, dazed but obedient, scrambled to his feet and went, taking little heed of his direction, knowing only that he was outcast for a reason that his mind had failed to grasp. His own kind had rejected him because, in some way, he was different. He went, saddened and bewildered by the burden laid on him, the burden of his humanity. The instincts inherited with his father's blood prompted him to take one of the trodden paths that led to the villages, but he resisted them. He had not forgotten that Lycidas, who was older and wiser than he, had distrusted the fire-makers and all their ways. So he went on and on, traveling by night, and sleeping in some nook or cranny during the day, until he had left the country of the chalk hills far behind.

He came at last to the foot of a great cliff whose rocky face was honeycombed with caves. He climbed a path that led to one of them, getting narrower as it ascended and breaking off altogether a little way past the entrance. It was growing dusk and he was tired. He had to turn back or spend the night in that place. He peered into the cavity. It was too open to the air to retain any smell of its former occupants, and all that remained of them were a few splintered fragments of bone scattered about the floor. In one corner a tiny spring bubbled up and sank again through a rift fringed with ferns. Laon drank from it, and then lay down and slept.

He liked this country, and he went no farther. The cave he made his sleeping-place, and he went down into the woods to hunt for food. He found plenty to eat, and the forest glades were beautiful, but he was still lonely, missing the centaurs who had run races and played with him. And then, one evening, he came to the little pool in the clearing. The turf on its bank was mossy and cool and pleasant to lie upon, and there were oaks near enough to cast some shade when shadows were longest, but

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the only tree that overhung the water was a silver birch, very straight and slim, with its gleaming white trunk and delicate tracery of leaves. Laon, kneeling by the brink of the pool to drink, had paused to look at the reflection of his own face and then raised his head, aware of some movement on the farther side of the water. A girl was standing by the birch. It was not very easy to see her apart from the tree, for her skin had something of its silvery bloom, and her long hair was brown as its branches. She was elusive as the other fauns had been, as Laon himself was if he had but known it. As she stepped into the water and swam to the middle of the pool, where she turned over to float, she seemed to be a thing of shifting lights and shadows, and her hands might have been the lily buds sinking slowly into the depths. She was on the bank again and wringing out her wet hair when she caught sight of Laon, and then she was gone in a moment, and he was alone again.

He went away then reluctantly, and returned the next morning bringing offerings, a bunch of wild parsley, some bright stones he had found and treasured, an old honeycomb he had discovered in a cranny of the cliff. These gifts he laid at the foot of the birch, but though he waited a long while she did not appear, and he went away disappointed. That night he slept scarcely at all, and he was back in the clearing before sunrise. The stones lay where he had placed them, but the flowers and the honeycomb were gone. Something moved beside him. He turned, and there she was, standing so near him that he could feel her breath on his cheek. She had more substance than when he had first seen her, and a greater warmth of coloring. Her parted lips were scarlet as poppy petals. She looked at him shyly, shrinking a little, ready for instant flight.

'What are you?'

'I am Laon.'

'I am Myrtis.'

There were no others of her kind in that forest. Long ago there had been many, but the woodcutters had come and the charcoal-burners, and had frightened them all away. Myrtis had grown up quite alone, and, when her first fears had worn off, she was as glad as Laon had been to find a playmate. Before the spring was over they were lovers.

To the fauns of the chalk hills, as to the centaur Lycidas and his brother, love was an appetite to be satisfied by casual matings. But Laon, outwardly the child of his mother, came also of the race which had seen ships set sail, and armies on the march, cities sacked and burning and whole countries laid waste for the sake of a woman. He was capable of passion and — a thing more rare among men — of tenderness.

At first when he clasped her she had baffled him; he had a sense of having gathered an armful of lilies from the pool, cool and sweet but lacking in response, and her lovely eyes were too like the still water that could only reflect what was mirrored on its surface. But she emerged, little by little, from her surroundings, becoming definitely a creature of flesh and blood, with a heart and senses like his own. She would wake him sometimes, in the darkest hour before the dawn, with clinging kisses and arms that tightened about his neck, dumbly seeking some reassurance. She was as little articulate as he, but if she could have spoken then it would have been to ask, 'Will you love me? Will you be with me always?' For the shadow of impending loss, the instinctive foreknowledge of humanity, lay on her now as well as on him. Presently they found that she was unable to return to her tree. Hitherto she had slept through the winter, waking to

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renewed life when the sap rose; but now she would have to face its rigors with Laon. Love had outlawed her, too. The faun made a shelter for them both in the hollow trunk of an oak, and lined it with dry fern and moss.

Myrtis had grown languid and heavy-eyed, and would hardly be persuaded to leave the hollow oak, and toward midwinter, when the cold increased, she and Laon often slept without stirring for days together. One morning he was awakened by her moaning. She was sunk so deep in the fern that he could see nothing of her but the curve of her brown head and a white shoulder veiled by her hair. He bent over her, calling her by name, and after a moment she raised herself a little, but with an evident effort. Laon was puzzled and rather frightened. Physical pain and weakness were still strange to him. He had known little of either, though sometimes he had been cold and sometimes hungry. Was Myrtis hungry, perhaps? She had lain down again and seemed to be sleeping. He waited a moment and then crawled out of the tree.

The forest was very silent, caught fast in the grip of the frost. The grass was stiff with rime and the dead leaves crackled underfoot. Laon looked about him as he went, but the birds had gathered the last of the haws, and he had stripped the sloe and whin bushes near the clearing long ago.

He was about to turn back now when he became aware of a pattering of light hooves close by. He caught at a branch and swung himself up into the fork of a tree just as a young goatherd came along, followed by his flock.

Evidently this was to be the end of their day's journey. The goats scattered and began to crop the scanty herbage, while the boy, having collected an armful of dead wood, set about making a fire. Laon watched him strike a spark from two flint stones and set light to the dry twigs. A puff of smoke rose up and the flames leaped and glowed in the gathering dusk, while the herd unrolled his pack and set out his few belongings — a woolen cloak, a couple of bowls made from gourds, and some odds and ends whose uses were not clear. There were some kids with the flock — little weakly creatures, with tottering legs and horns just beginning to sprout. The herd milked one of the mothers into his largest bowl before he sat down to his supper. Afterward he rolled himself in his cloak and lay down by the red embers of his fire. Laon waited a little longer before he slipped down from his tree.

The flock showed no fear of him and allowed him to go among them as one of themselves. He lifted the smallest of the kids in his arms. It was evidently used to being carried, but it bleated as he moved away, and its mother rose at once and followed. It was nearly noon the next day when he reached the clearing. He was tired and footsore, and the poor goat could hardly drag herself along, but the kid was lively enough and began to frisk about when Laon set it down at the foot of the hollow oak. He called Myrtis to come and see what he had brought her, but there was no answer. Laon's face fell. He had been pleased with himself and wanted to boast to his mate of his prowess. Was she angry because he had left her for so long? He remembered that she had been ailing. He crawled through the hole in the trunk.

Something had happened in his absence, a thing perfectly natural and yet as miraculous as the unfolding of a flower. Myrtis lay as he had left her, half buried in the fern, but curled up in the hollow of her arm, nestling against her breast, was a tiny creature with a round head covered with downy black

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hair. For a moment the faun stared in silence. Then he extended a finger and laid it very gently on one of the small clenched fists. Myrtis looked up then, meeting his eyes, and smiled. As Laon bent over her she slipped her other arm about his neck and drew him down beside her. He learned that she had tried to follow him and call him back, but had not been able to go beyond the silver birch. Their child had been born there, and she had broken the ice in the pool to bathe it before she carried it back to the oak. Since then she had slept and she felt better, but she was very hungry. Laon brightened. He scrambled out of the hole and came back presently with his stolen bowl half full of warm milk. Myrtis drank eagerly, and he finished what was left, and then all three, mother and father and new born atom of semi-humanity, huddling together for warmth, drifted off into the profound and placid sleep of contented animals.

During the days that followed Myrtis lay still, regaining her strength slowly, made drowsy by the intense cold, and waking only to feed her child. It was a good baby, and its tiny brown face was often puckered by laughter. Laon fancied that it heard and saw more than its parents. Its dark eyes were uncanny in their intelligence. It heard — what did it hear? What did it see? Laon, wondering, remembered the shadow that had blotted out the stars on the night he left the chalk hills. 'Choose!' the voice had said. He had made no choice as yet, but the current of his desires was setting toward the fire-makers, and he was bearing Myrtis with him.

Laon was uneasy, filled with vague fears. The goat had begun to show signs of distress and was very restless, especially at night. They would have taken her into the tree with them, but the opening was too narrow. She made frequent attempts to get in, and Laon was trying to soothe her after one of them when he heard a strange crying noise that rose and died away again. It was very far off, and when it ceased the ensuing silence seemed more mournful than before. The goat was trembling violently. The sound had conveyed nothing to Laon's mind. He had never heard it before. But there is nothing so infectious as fear. He decided that they would go back to his cave. . . .

There was still some fern that Laon had gathered last spring in the cave. Myrtis lay down and slept, with her child in her arms, while the goat munched the dry stalks. When she woke, Laon, who had been busy all day carrying stones and dead wood up to the cave, sat in the entrance pulling the sticks about and knocking stones together. He was trying to make a fire. For a long while he fumbled over his flints without success. His arms ached and he was tired and sleepy. The fauns of the chalk hills would have given up the attempt, but Laon was here because Laon was different. At last he struck a spark and then another. The dry grass he had laid under the sticks caught easily and a flame sprang up. Very soon the firelight was flickering over the sides of the caves. The goat, who was used to fires, only blinked her strange yellow eyes, but Myrtis shrank away, terrified, and it was some time before Laon could soothe her. She could not tell him why she was afraid. Her dread was instinctive. The trees were her kin, and for them fire is always the ultimate destroyer. She remained in the farthest corner of the cave with her baby, but Laon was so pleased with his new plaything that he would hardly leave it, and during a part of that night and the next day he sat by it and fed it with bits of stick.

The sun was near setting when he

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went out on to the ledge to bring in some more wood. He happened to look over the edge and then saw something moving far below under the trees that grew up to the foot of the cliff. It was an animal unknown to him, smaller than a deer and very active. While he watched it was joined by several others. They ran about in circles with their noses to the ground and seemed to be trying to pick up a scent. Presently one of them stopped short, threw up his head, and howled. It was a call to the pack, and the response, waking every echo along the cliff side, was the sound Laon had heard two nights before when it was still very far away.

Laon, crouching on the ledge above, was motionless as a bird that sees a hawk hovering over its nest. That crying was the voice of incarnate hunger, ravening for its prey. The danger was imminent, overwhelming. The enemy was the old enemy of man. 'Choose!' the voice had said; and he had chosen, taking up the burdens of a lasting love. He thought of Myrtis, and she was beside him. He sent her back into the cave where the goat and the kid cowered, terror-stricken. The wolves had gathered in a compact mass at the foot of the cliff, but there was movement on the outskirts of the pack, and presently, in a silence that was as awful as their crying had been, they poured in one direction, like a brown viscous stream. The scent had been found, and with it the path.

Among the stones Laon had collected for the building of his fire there had been one with a hole in the middle large enough for him to push his hand through. He picked it up now and went a little way down the path to meet his foes. He had not long to wait. They came up swiftly, jostling one another in their eagerness, the leaders running three abreast. But the ledge was hardly wide enough, and as they halted, seeing Laon in their way, the others coming up behind thrust the one on the outside too near the edge. He missed his footing and fell with a yelp, crashing through the tree tops to the ground beneath. Laon's arms rose and fell like flails. The ledge grew slippery with blood — their blood and his own. The living had no care for the dead and wounded, and for one wolf he maimed or killed, ten were thrust off the path by their fellows. Their bodies went hurtling through space, turning over and over until they broke through the trees, but there were still more pressing on. Laon's breath came in gasps, he was dizzy and sick. He staggered, and in that instant a wolf got past him and ran into the cave. He dared not turn to follow it. The rest would have had him down.

He had a moment of anguish during which nothing was clear to him beyond the remembrance — how torturing then! — of the hands of Myrtis, pale as lily buds, sinking through deep water out of sight. He thought he would hear her screaming, but instead there was a yelp from the wolf as it ran down the path, its back singed and smoking, to crash into the others. And Myrtis followed, Myrtis, with glittering eyes and streaming hair, carrying the brand she had snatched from the fire to defend herself and her child. It was a branch broken from a fir tree and full of resin, and it burst into flame as she struck at the wolves. They shrank from it and from her, snapping and snarling at those behind who would still have urged them on. There was a moment of uncertainty, and then the living tide turned, ebbing away.

Myrtis flung her torch down upon the blood-stained path. Now that the danger was passed she was trembling and her face was white. Laon took her in his arms and carried her back to the cave, and as he went, stumbling in his

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utter weariness, he pressed her body against his, and his lips sought hers. He loved her at that moment with an agony of desire that was altogether human. For he had learned the answer to the question he had asked long since of Lycidas. He had seen death. He knew.

At the foot of the cliff the survivors of the pack were devouring the carcasses of those that had fallen from the ledge. The sun had set while they were still fighting. The night was clear, very cold, lit by innumerable stars. And between them and the earth a shadow passed, with a sound of laughter.

FLAUBERT'S LITERARY LIMITS

From the *Times Literary Supplement, December* 15
(NORTHCLIFFE PRESS)

THERE were two Flauberts. One was born on the twelfth of this month a hundred years ago in the surgeon's house at Rouen hospital; the other in enthusiastic minds in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. One was a broad, big-boned, lovable, rather simple-minded man, with the look and laugh of a farmer, who spent his life in agonies over the intensive culture of half a dozen strangely assorted volumes; the other was an incorporeal giant, a symbol, a war cry, a banner under which a youthful army marched and marches still to the rout of the bourgeois and the revolution of literature.

To distinguish these beings from each other is not so difficult as to understand how they came to be so completely interfused that the separation of the legend from the reality may appear an act of wanton iconoclasm. So much has been derived from the legendary Flaubert, so many advancing waves have borne his name on the crest of their attack, that he has acquired the dignity of an institution. We have Remy de Gourmont declaring that Flaubert was the very archetype of the creative writer, for two reasons: because he devoted his life and his personality to his work, suffering nothing to be wasted in the exigencies and delights of mere living; and because he was preëminently gifted with visual imagination.

It is not easy to see why the value of a writer's work should depend upon the completeness of his incineration on the altar of Art. A good writer has to make sacrifices, of course, but he need not (indeed, he had better not) burn himself to ashes. Greater writers than Flaubert have not felt the necessity. To one who is not a born Flaubertian the astonishing tortures he inflicted upon himself would naturally suggest, not that his genius was preëminent, but that his creative impulse was not of the strongest; while the truth about his visual imagination is that it was not of the finest quality. Flaubert adored images; he believed, truly enough, that the highest poetic faculty is mastery of metaphor; he fancied that when he was wholly free to write what pleased him — though when was he not? — he would triumphantly indulge his passion. Yet in fact Flaubert's use of imagery is invariably strained or commonplace, and often both. Take the similes with

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which *L'Éducation Sentimentale* begins and ends; neither is successful. Here is the first: —

> Enfin le navire partit; et les deux berges, peuplées de magasins, de chantiers et d'usines, filèrent comme deux larges rubans qu'on déroule.

The image is forced, and it gives the wrong *tempo* to the opening movement. A torpedo-boat destroyer could not steam fast enough to justify it wholly, and this was a river steamer on the Seine. The second simile is used by Madame Arnoux when she revisits Frédéric Moreau.

> Elle s'étonnait de sa mémoire. Cependant, elle lui dit: —
>
> 'Quelquefois, vos paroles me reviennent comme un écho lointain, comme le son d'un cloche apporté par le vent: et il me semble que vous êtes là, quand je lis les passages d'amour dans les livres.'

This is not, indeed, a visual image; but its discrepancy is not less remarkable for that. Had the words been given to the second-rate romanticism of Emma Bovary they would have been in place. But Madame Arnoux was designed for Emma's opposite. For the sake of a threadbare 'poetical' metaphor Flaubert was willing to make his heroine speak out of character. It would be hard to find an absolutely convincing image in the whole of his work. Some of them are really comic.

> Frédéric, ayant monté l'escalier *comme une flèche* . . . Toutes ces images qu'elle se créait lui faisait comme autant de fils qu'elle aurait perdus, *l'excès de la douleur multipliant sa maternité* . . .

The fact is that Flaubert did not possess the finest kind of literary discrimination. He had an unusual visual faculty which he turned to good account, but the use he made of it was primitive. Most of his descriptions are visual pageantry, sometimes impressive, sometimes beautiful, sometimes as tedious as the tail-end of a Lord Mayor's show when we are waiting to cross the road. Of the faculty which employs visual imagery to differentiate the subtler emotions of the soul Flaubert had little or nothing at all. The true faculty of metaphor was denied him.

Lacking this, a writer cannot be reckoned among the great masters of style. But Flaubert lacked something more fundamental still. If we consider his works in the order in which they were written, we are chiefly struck by the strange absence of inward growth which they reveal. The surface texture of *L'Éducation Sentimentale* is more closely woven than that of *Madame Bovary*, but the scope of the story itself is, if anything, less significant. Flaubert's vision of life had not deepened in the long interval which separates the two works. He saw a larger extent of life, perhaps, but he saw no further into it; he had acquired more material, but no greater power of transmuting it; he manipulated more characters, but he could not make them more alive. Though the epicure of technical effects may find more to interest him in the later book, it is impossible not to endorse the general verdict that *Madame Bovary* is Flaubert's masterpiece. Undoubtedly, the choice lies between those books, for *La Tentation de Saint-Antoine* and *Salammbô* are set-pieces which will not kindle, and *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (which de Gourmont declared the equal of *Don Quixote!*) cannot be redeemed from dullness by the mildly amusing bubbles which float to the surface of its viscous narrative.

We may suspect that a writer who does not really develop, the vitality and significance of whose latest work is less than that of his first, has not the root of the matter in him. And Flaubert had not. It may not be given to mortal men to understand life more deeply at the end than at the beginning of their

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share of it; but they can more keenly feel its complexity and its wonder; they can attain to an eminence from which they contemplate it calmly and undismayed. The great writers do this, and convey the issue of their contemplation to us through the created world which they devise. But of this unmortified detachment Flaubert was incapable. He lived and died indignant at the stupidity of the human race. As he was at thirty, so he was at sixty; in stature of soul he was a child.

'Récriminer,' asks Baudelaire in *L'Art Romantique*, 'faire de l'opposition, et même réclamer la justice, n'est-ce pas s'emphilistiner quelque peu?' In those three occupations Flaubert spent all his time when he emerged from his *gueuloir;* and it is not too much to say that he was a good deal of a Philistine. He had a *bourgeois* horror of the *bourgeois*, and it was this repulsion rather than a natural attraction which kept him chained to his desk at Croisset. Literature was for him an ascetic revenge upon life, not a culmination of it: he tore himself up by the roots and planted himself in the most highly artificial atmosphere which a considerable writer has ever breathed. Under this unhealthy stimulation he evolved for himself the doctrine of the sovereign autonomy of art.

He could do no less. Having chosen the ivory tower he had to justify its existence. Hating life, he had to be convinced that literature was also indifferent to it. Accordingly, he tried to persuade himself that the subject-matter of a work of literature was of no account. A structure of beauty could be raised upon no-matter-what foundation, and beauty was absolute and incommensurable.

Two things are remarkable about this æsthetic theory of Flaubert's: the theory itself, and his manner of holding it. Though it seemed to resemble the doctrine held by other French romantics of his generation, it was profoundly different. Baudelaire, for instance, who claimed for the poet the right to deal with subjects generally held to be immoral, made his claim on behalf of what he considered to be the higher morality of art. He believed that the importance of a subject was independent of the moral estimation in which it was held but he insisted that the subject should be important. Flaubert, on the other hand, tried to believe that the significance of a subject was an unessential quality. The writer actually endowed it with importance by the beauty of the language in which he treated it. Pressed to its logical conclusion, the theory is almost meaningless, for the writer must choose a subject and must have motives for his choice. So that it is not surprising that Flaubert never wholly satisfied himself. He wavered. At one moment he asserted that 'tout découle de la conception'; at another that style was 'the soul beneath the words'; at yet another that everything in literature depended on character. These beliefs do not necessarily conflict with one another, but not one of them can really be reconciled with the notion that the subject-matter is indifferent. For some reason Flaubert was incapable of thinking the question out to a conclusion. His formulated theory of writing went no further than the injunction — valuable enough — to think clearly, express precisely, and read aloud to test the rhythm.

All this he did, and did so well, that our feeling when we contemplate the years he spent upon works so inwardly hollow as *Salammbô*, *La Tentation*, and *Bouvard et Pécuchet* is one of utter dismay. It seems that it was only by accident that he stumbled on a subject of any significance at all; and indeed it was. It was not the fault of his theory;

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that had little influence on his practice, and was rather (as most literary theories are) a justification of the accomplished fact. His choice of subjects was governed by his temperament and his temperament was governed by his two predominant emotions, indignation and aversion. Indignation drove him to Yonville and Nogent and Paris; aversion gave him wings to fly to Carthage and the Thebaïd. His realism was of disgust, his romanticism of predilection; the realism was in part triumphantly successful, the failure of the romanticism complete. Never was a literary achievement more deeply paradoxical. Flaubert's natural expression was satire, but as we know from *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, and as he himself also recognized, his hand was as heavy in satire as his thought was cumbersome.

Indignation and aversion, unless they find their proper satisfaction in satire, are treacherous emotions for a writer to build on; too frequently they turn to petulance and superficiality. Flaubert was saved from this by the qualities of his character. He had an immense capacity for work, a passionate love of truth, and, most important of all, he worshiped the great writers before him; as he said, 'he had the bump of veneration strongly developed.' Though he recognized, with a clearness that should be disconcerting to his own idolaters, that he was of another and a lower order than his demi-gods, he saw that they had one quality which he, too, might aim to possess. They were objective; they did not intrude their personalities into their work; they were content to represent and to record. Long before he began *Madame Bovary*, his determination to emulate them in this was fixed; when he was only twenty-three he declared that 'dans la première période de la vie d'artiste il est mieux de jeter du dehors tout ce qu'on a de vraiment intime, d'original, d'individuel.' It sounds rather forbiddingly professional for twenty-three; and, in fact, Flaubert had a fling on Saint Antony before sitting down to *Madame Bovary*, his first real exercise in his self-imposed discipline. It was much more than an exercise, of course, for Flaubert had a passion of indignation that needed vent; but without his resolve to be impersonal it would have wasted itself in vain.

In sacrificing his personality Flaubert thought he sacrificed much. He believed that he was 'born lyrical.' Born romantic would have been nearer the truth, for we have to qualify lyrical by his repeated and truthful confession that his talent was not *primesautier*. His natural bent was toward romantic dream and romantic tirade, and his gift of lyrical expression very small. But the strength of a desire cannot be measured by the capacity of satisfying it; and there is no cause to doubt Flaubert's sincerity when he rebelled, as he rebelled continually, against the 'ugliness' of his work on *Madame Bovary*. Ah, what he would do when he had a subject of his own! He was tired, tired to death, of the *bourgeois*. It was time to drop them forever. But the subject of his own never came. At first he imagined that *La Tentation* and *Salammbô* were completely congenial, but the illusion was brief; and though he never went so far as to declare that these subjects were ugly, his complaints and his torments were the same. It was not surprising that in his last two books he should return to the detested *bourgeois*. In one sense at least all subjects were the same to him; he suffered equally from them all.

Two demons stood always between Flaubert and his dreams, the demon of style and the demon of truthfulness. Of the two it was the demon of truthfulness that tormented him the more. It drove him to fantastic efforts of

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documentation; his researches for *Salammbô* were prodigious, and at the very commencement of *Bouvard et Pécuchet* he confessed that he had read 1500 volumes for it. Yet he seems never to have asked himself jesting Pilate's question. What was this truth for which he labored? Had he asked, he would have been forced to reply: The truth of history, not of art. But he was never able to disentangle them. His letters sometimes make nightmare reading. He must find an actual piece of France for Bouvard and Pécuchet to farm in. It was not enough to invent the episode of their geological expedition to the coast; young de Maupassant must provide him with a stretch of real cliff where the complicated event was possible, and he wrote again and again till he got it. A passion for truth of this kind is a purely morbid condition in a writer; he must indeed be 'drunk with ink' to feel it. Such truth has no value in itself, and the search for it is bound to prejudice the truth which is proper to literature. The verisimilitude of art does not depend on documents — neither, indeed, does the verisimilitude of history itself — but upon the creative imagination and the sensibility from which the imagination is replenished. In both these Flaubert was deficient; the range of his sensibility was small and his creative imagination feeble. He tried to eke them out with a reference library, with the result that in all his books save *Madame Bovary* and *Un Cœur Simple* his tenuous characters dissolve away into their own background.

With the demon of style, as he understood style, his struggle was more successful. But in order to appraise his victory, we must remember how he understood it. So many passages in his letters reveal his conception that the choice is embarrassing; one may suffice: —

> Ce qui distingue les grands génies c'est la généralisation et la création; ils résument en un type des personnalités éparses et apportent à la conscience du genre humain des personnages nouveaux; est-ce qu'on ne croit pas à l'existence de Don Quichotte comme à celle de César? Shakespeare est quelquechose de formidable sous ce rapport: ce n'était pas un homme, mais un continent; il y avait des grands hommes en lui, des foules entières, des paysages; ils n'ont pas besoin de faire du style, ceux-là, ils sont forts en dépit de toutes les fautes et à cause d'elles; mais nous, les petits, nous ne valons que par l'exécution achevée. Hugo en ce siècle enfoncera tout le monde quoi qu'il soit plein de mauvaises choses, mais quel souffle! Je hasarde ici une proposition que je n'oserais dire nulle part: c'est que les très grands hommes écrivent souvent fort mal, et tant mieux pour eux.

A style of which the greatest writers have no need, to the want of which they owe their greatness, is a dubious light to follow. It was less dangerous for Flaubert, who saw his own limitations clearly, than for those who have blindly followed him. But probably Flaubert also paid a price for his obsession; probably it distracted his attention from the content of his work and induced him to spend energies that might have gone to the expansion of his sensibility upon the painful polishing of a hollow surface; the substance which could have made it solid his starved sensibility could not provide. One dare not dogmatize. Who knows for certain that a writer by taking thought can add a cubit to the stature of his soul? Possibly Flaubert, being the man he was, made a right choice; possibly he persevered where he could make some progress and abandoned the road along which advance was barred. But the probability and the evidence point the other way. The book whose style he labored least — a Flaubertian minimum is not as other men's — is the one by which he is chiefly remem-

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bered. The youthful *Madame Bovary* has a validity which he was to achieve only once again, in *Un Cœur Simple*. *Madame Bovary* alone satisfies his own definition of a great work of literature; it gathers scattered personalities into a type and brings new personalities to the consciousness of the human race. Emma Bovary and M. Homais are types of this kind; they are the only ones (save perhaps Félicie) in Flaubert's work.

Flaubert began his career with what is, take it all in all, a masterpiece; he was to write no other. *L'Éducation Sentimentale* is not one. It may be life, but it is not living; it is a work of history rather than literature. Flaubert had no certain hold of his characters, and his handling of his theme at the crucial moment falls to the level of melodrama. The most famous passage in the book is the death of Dussardier:—

Mais, sur les marches de Tortoni, un homme — Dussardier — remarquable de loin à sa haute taille, restait sans plus bouger qu'une cariatide.

Un des agents qui marchait en tête, le tricorne sur les yeux, le menaça de son épée.

L'autre alors, s'avançant d'un pas, se mit à crier: —

'Vive la République!'

Il tomba sur le dos, les bras en croix.

Un hurlement d'horreur s'éleva de la foule. L'agent fit un cercle autour de lui avec son regard; et Frédéric, béant, reconnut Sénécal.

Il voyagea.

Il connut la mélancolie des paquebots, les froids réveils sous la tente, l'étourdissement des paysages et des ruines, l'amertume des sympathies interrompues.

Il revint.

'Et Frédéric, béant, reconnut Sénécal,' has been for years the object of an esoteric admiration as a masterpiece of style. In a different book it might, indeed, have been overwhelming; in the gray monotone of *L'Éducation Sentimentale* it is a splash of discordant red. The dramatic artifice tears through the even texture of the narrative; it belongs to another world of seeing and feeling, and the measure of its discordance is our astonishment at Sénécal's surprising change. If a respectable solicitor were to slip behind a screen and reappear in a cardboard nose and a pair of huge moustaches, it could not be more disturbing than this *coup de théâtre* in the most laboriously realistic story ever written.

Only if style could be separated from content, the surface from the perceptions which make it solid, could Flaubert's style be praised without reserve. The distinction, as he knew, cannot be made. And Flaubert's style is sometimes perfect, sometimes bad, more often indifferent than either. It is at its highest level in *Un Cœur Simple*. There it follows the contour of his thought with a perfect economy.

Elle se levait dès l'aube, pour ne pas manquer la messe, et travaillait jusqu'au soir sans interruption; puis, le dîner étant fini, la vaisselle en ordre et la porte bien close, elle enfouissait la bûche sous les cendres et s'endormait devant l'âtre, son rosaire à la main. Personne, dans les marchandages, ne montrait plus d'entêtement. Quant à la propreté, le poli de ses casseroles faisait le désespoir des autres servantes. Econome, elle mangeait avec lenteur et recueillait du doigt sur la table les miettes de son pain — un pain de douze livres, cuit exprès pour elle, et qui durait vingt jours.

En toute saison elle portait un mouchoir d'indienne fixé dans le dos par un épingle, un bonnet lui cachant ses cheveux, des bas gris, un jupon rouge, et par-dessus sa camisole un tablier à bavette, comme les infirmières d'hôpital.

Son visage était maigre et sa voix aïgue. A vingt-cinq ans, on lui en donnait quarante. Dès la cinquantaine, elle ne marqua plus aucun age; — et, toujours silencieuse, la taille droite et les gestes mésurés, semblait une femme de bois, fonctionnant d'une manière automatique.

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Elle avait eu, comme une autre, son histoire d'amour.

How exquisite — to descend to particulars — is the order of the words in 'recueillait du doigt sur la table les miettes de son pain'; it gives the gesture its significance and yields to the rhythm of the paragraph. And the final sentence, which opens the second chapter, is characteristic of Flaubert at his best. He was a master of the short sentence even more than of the period. The effects he wrung from it are sometimes astonishing. Here the contrast between the movement which ends 'une femme de bois fonctionnant d'une manière automatique' and the short sentence which follows is carefully modulated by the insertion of 'comme une autre' where we should not expect it. It not only gives us the very substance of Félicie, but saturates the narrative with a sense of time.

This power of awakening in us a sense of the process of time was Flaubert's most individual achievement as a writer. We might almost say that wherever we are struck with the beauty of a page or a passage in his work we shall find the secret in this presentation of time. *Un Cœur Simple* unrolls a life from beginning to end in ninety short pages, and we feel every year of it drop slowly into the past. In the passage we have quoted from *L'Éducation Sentimentale* the significance of 'Il voyagea' is unmistakable, and there again Flaubert uses the division of a chapter to achieve his effect. His devices are innumerable. In the last sentence of *Herodias* it is the choice and placing of an adverb, 'Comme elle était très lourde, ils la portaient alternativement.' There it is too deliberate. But the first twenty pages of *Madame Bovary* are a splendid example of Flaubert's resource. The story is swift and unhesitating up to the eighteenth page. Charles Bovary's schooldays and first marriage flow by in a steady stream; it is one life among many. Suddenly the tempo is changed in a paragraph: —

Elle le reconduisait toujours jusqu'à la première marche du perron. Lorsqu'on n'avait pas encore amené son cheval, elle restait là. On s'était dit adieu, on ne se parlait plus; le grand air l'entourait, levant pêle-mêle les petits cheveux follets de sa nuque, ou secouant sur sa hanche les cordons de son tablier qui se tortillaient comme des banderolles. Une fois, par un temps de dégel, l'écorce des arbres suintait dans le cour, la neige sur les couvertures des bâtiments se fondait. Elle était sur la seuil; elle alla chercher son ombrelle, elle l'ouvrit. L'ombrelle, de soie gorge-de-pigeon, que traversait le soleil, éclairait de reflets mobiles la peau blanche de sa figure. Elle souriait ladessous à la chaleur tiède; et on entendait les gouttes d'eau, une à une, tomber sur la moire tendue.

It is like a sudden oasis of calm in which everything can be seen, everything heard. The languorous beauty of the last sentence echoes on like the sound of the drops it registers. We feel that that day was the first in his life for Charles Bovary.

If one were to press home the analysis of these characteristic effects of Flaubert's, they would be found to depend generally on two elements, an unusual use of the verb tenses which an English reader can more easily feel than describe, and the manipulation of the rhythm. A period like this from *Madame Bovary* has the complicated rhythm of a fine piece of blank verse. Flaubert learned something of this from Chateaubriand, and another part from Voltaire and Montesquieu, from whom he quoted with delight: 'Les vices d'Alexandre étaient extrêmes comme ses vertus; il était terrible dans sa colère; elle le rendait cruel.' A thousand sentences after that pattern can be found in his work. The quality that fascinated him in it was not so much the rhythm as the close texture on

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which the larger effects of rhythm depend. Each one of those pronouns binds the parts of the sentence into one whole. Flaubert, as always, turned his admirations to account. He worked upon the hints they gave him indefatigably, and he fashioned for himself an instrument upon which no tones were impossible.

Because of this Flaubert is indeed a master; but he is a minor master. In the years he spent on perfecting the instrument, he forgot, if he ever knew, what tunes are worth playing; and too often in his work we hear him sounding idly for their own intrinsic beauty notes which have no part in any larger plan. He was never passionately possessed by a comprehensive theme, and he never clearly saw that the rendering of such a theme was the final purpose of all the explorations of language on which he lavished himself. His sacrifice was as pathetic as it was noble. When we read such a passage as this in his letters — and there are many of them — we feel as sad as he: —

> Néanmoins, il y a une chose triste, c'est de voir combien les grands hommes arrivent aisément à l'effet en dehors de l'art même: quoi de plus mal bâti que bien des choses de Rabelais, Cervantes, Molière, et Hugo? Mais quels coups de poing subits! Quel puissance dans un seul mot! Nous, il faut entasser l'un sur l'autre un tas de petits cailloux pour faire nos pyramides qui ne vont pas à la centième partie des leurs, lesquels sont d'un seul bloc.

What is this art which the masters triumph by ignoring? If they have no art what is the value of art at all? And why call it art? Flaubert never answered the question: the greatest writers remained prodigies for him; there was no room for them in his philosophy.

But for Flaubert, though they existed on heights unapproachable, they did exist, and he never forgot them. What are we to say of a generation that has seen in Flaubert's 'art' the highest achievement of literature, and in Flaubert himself the type of the great writer? Were it not the fact, the collective hallucination would seem like a chapter in a fairy tale. We can see the cause of the aberration. Flaubert's 'art' is an art which minor writers can understand; in pretending to surrender themselves to it — for a real surrender is much too painful — they have the satisfaction of manipulating a mystery. But the mystification has lasted too long. The invention of 'art' has done no good to art, and it has interposed a veil between Flaubert's work and the general judgment. To be critical of Flaubert is to prejudice a vested interest, so large an edifice has been built upon the insecure foundation.

Flaubert came as near to genius as a man can come by the taking of pains. Just as his example will be a perpetual encouragement to all honest artificers of literature, it will be a will-o'-the-wisp to those who presume to measure the giants by it. Flaubert's work can never cease to smell of the lamp; but by the writing of one fine book and one perfect story and by his devoted researches into the capacity of language, he is one of the greatest minor heroes of letters. More than this, his correspondence shows him to us as one of the most lovable of all writers: we smile at him tearing his hair in the silence of his study, but the smile is the smile of sympathy and admiration. Those who claim more for him than this would lose all if it were possible, for they can only exalt him by deposing greater men than he. Flaubert stands in no need of such extravagant estimation; and we know him well enough to be certain that he would have resented bitterly a worship paid to himself at the cost of the divinities he adored.

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IS THE UNIVERSE INFINITE?

BY CHARLES NORDMANN

[*This article forms the seventh chapter of M. Nordmann's forthcoming book,* Einstein et l'Univers, *which the author describes as 'a glimpse into the mystery of things.' M. Nordmann is an astronomer at the Observatoire de Paris.*]

Is the Universe infinite?

That is a question over which men have always puzzled themselves, without, perhaps, forming any very definite idea of its meaning. The generalizations of the Theory of Relativity permit us to approach it from a new and extremely subtle angle. Kant — that genial grumbler who found it so horribly monotonous to see the same sun burning on and on, and the same springtime bursting into flower, year after year — depended on metaphysical considerations to sustain his contention that space is infinite and strewed with similar stars throughout its whole extent; but it is probably safer to examine this problem by reliance solely upon the recent results of observation, carefully closing the door of our discussion upon that hopeless confusion known as metaphysics, which would compel us to attempt a definition of pure space, to admit that we do not know what it is, and even to doubt whether it exists at all.

It is proof enough how little we know about the true nature of space, that the followers of Newton believe in its existence, whereas the disciples of Einstein regard it merely as an inseparable attribute of objects. They define space in terms of matter; and so they have matter still to define. Descartes, on the other hand, sought to define matter in terms of extent — that is to say, of space. A vicious circle, either way you take it. The best plan, therefore, is to lay aside altogether the metaphysical reasoning of Kant and to fix ourselves inexorably upon experience and that which is measurable.

In order to simplify matters, we may begin by admitting the reality of the *continuum* in which the stars float, which radiations penetrate, and which common sense calls 'space.' If stars were scattered everywhere without discrimination and if their number were infinite, space and matter would be everywhere. Then the Newtonians could share a common triumph with the Einsteinians — those who believe in absolute space and those who deny it, 'absolutists' as well as 'relativists.' How fortunate it would be if astronomical observations should show that the number of the stars is actually infinite and if, in consequence, the exponents of the two conflicting opinions could equally claim a victory!

But what do astronomical observations show? There have been those who denied by *a priori* reasoning, that the number of the stars could be infinite. The number of the stars can actually be increased — thus their reasoning ran — whereas one can add nothing to infinity. Hence the number of the stars is finite. This reasoning is plausible but false, though even Voltaire permitted himself to be taken in by it. One need not be a great mathematician to know that one can always add to an infinite number, and that there exist infinite quantities which are themselves infinitely small in comparison with others.

Now let us turn to the facts. If the

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universe of the stars is without end, then any line of sight directed from the earth toward the heavens must encounter one of these stars. In that event, as the astronomer Olbers has remarked, the whole nocturnal sky would be of a brilliance comparable to that of the sun; but, as a matter of fact, the splendor of all the stars together is scarcely more than three thousand times that of a star of the first magnitude — that is to say, thirty million times smaller than that of the sun.

All this proves nothing, however, for Olbers's reasoning is false in two respects. First of all, there are a good many dim or extinct stars in the skies, some of which we know well enough to have studied and even weighed, and which manifest their existence by periodically eclipsing the neighboring stars around which they revolve. On the other hand, it has recently been discovered that large areas of celestial space are occupied by dim gaseous masses and clouds of cosmic dust which absorb the light of the stars lying beyond them, and thus one sees that the existence of an infinite number of stars is perfectly compatible with the comparative dimness of the sky at night.

Now if we adjust our spectacles — our telescopes, that is — and pass from the domain of the possible to that of the real, recent astronomical observations provide us with a number of very remarkable facts, leading irresistibly to the conclusions that are to follow in these pages. The number of stars is not — as has hitherto been believed — limited only by the power of our telescopes. As one leaves the sun, the number of stars contained within a given unit of space — the frequency of the stars, or the density of the stellar population, if I may say so — does not remain uniform, but diminishes as one approaches the boundaries of the Milky Way. The Milky Way is itself a gigantic archipelago of stars, and our sun seems to be situated in its central part. This veritable stellar ant heap, of which we are a part, has roughly the form of a watchcase, the thickness of which would be about half its width. Light, which goes in a second from the earth to the moon, in eight minutes from the earth to the sun, and in three years from the earth to the nearest star, requires at least 30,000 years — 300 centuries — to pierce completely through the Milky Way. This mass contains between 500,000,000 and 1,500,000,000 stars — a small enough number, to be sure, about equal to the number of human beings on the earth, and far smaller than the number of iron molecules in a single pinhead! Beyond it, highly compressed heaps of stars have been discovered, such as the Magellanic Clouds and the Cluster of Hercules, which scarcely seem to pass the confines of the Milky Way and appear to be its suburbs, though they extend far enough, and are situated rather to one side of the Milky Way. The most distant may be at least 200,000 light-years from us.

Beyond this, space seems to lie like a desert, void of stars for distances that are enormous, even in comparison with the universe of the Milky Way known to us, which we have just described. Beyond that, what is there?

Still more distant, there are stars of a singular type, the spiral nebulæ, scattered like silver snail shells in the garden of the stars, of which some hundreds of thousands have been found. There are astronomers who believe that these spiral masses of stars may perhaps be annexes of the Milky Way, reduced models of it; but the greater number are inclined to think — for very good reasons — that the spiral nebulæ are systems in every way analogous to the Milky Way and of dimen-

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sions comparable to its own. If the first group is right, the total group of stars accessible to our telescopes is of dimensions through which light can penetrate in some hundreds of thousands of years. If the second group is right, the dimensions of the stellar universe, of which we form a part, is increased tenfold, and some millions of years at least are necessary for the light to find its way through them. In the first case the whole stellar universe accessible to us consists of the Milky Way and its annexes, that is, of a purely local concentration of stars, beyond which nothing is to be observed. In that event the stellar universe is practically limited, or at least finite.

In the other case, the Milky Way is no more than one among myriads of spiral nebulæ already observed. The spiral nebulæ, with its hundreds of millions of stars, plays in the enlarged universe the same rôle as a single star in the Milky Way. The problem is the same as before, but on a far vaster scale; for now, just as the Milky Way is found to be formed of a heap or concentration of stars in finite number (as observation shows is the case), the accessible universe in the same way is found to be formed of a group of spiral nebulæ, finite in number. As to the last point we have no experience to guide us, but in my own opinion it is probable that when, some centuries from now, our instruments are of a power proportionate to this vast problem, they will give an affirmative answer. If it should be otherwise, if the distribution of the spiral nebulæ remained constantly about the same as we reach farther and farther, calculation shows that — the attraction being in inverse proportion to the square of the distances — gravitation would exceed all limit in such a universe, in the very region where we are living, for example. But this is not the case.

All this goes to show either that at very great distances the attraction of two masses decreases a little more rapidly than in inverse proportion to the squares of the distances, which is after all not entirely impossible; or else that the number of stellar systems and of stars is finite. Although I personally incline to the second hypothesis, I must admit that it cannot be demonstrated and in these matters there is always an alternative, some way of avoiding a conclusion, according to one's taste; and there is nothing to justify a positive assertion that the number of stars is finite. . . .

Henri Poincaré has calculated that the total number of stars in the Milky Way must be about a billion, a number that agrees well with the experimental results of astrophotographic estimates. Poincaré has also shown that there ought to be differences in the stars' own movements if there were many more of them than we see; and his calculations are therefore contrary to the hypothesis of an indefinite extension of a stellar universe, since the number of 'counted' stars almost coincides with the number that has been 'calculated.' But all these calculations prove nothing if the power of gravitation is not — at enormous distances — exactly inverse to the square of the distance.

If, on the other hand, the universe were infinite in space such as classic science conceived, the light of the stars and the isolated stars themselves would little by little lose themselves forever in the infinite, and the cosmos would vanish. Our spirit recoils from such a consequence, and astronomical observations show no indication of such a dismemberment.

To put it in a word, in the space conceived by the 'absolutists' the stellar universe cannot be infinite unless the law of the square of distances is not

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quite exact where very distant masses are concerned; and yet it cannot be finite unless it is ephemeral in time. For Newton, however, the *stellar* universe can be finite in an infinite universe, since space for him need not presuppose any matter. For Einstein, on the other hand, the Universe itself and the material or stellar Universe are one and the same thing, since there is no such thing as space without matter.

These difficulties and uncertainties in great measure disappear when we consider space, or rather space-time from Einstein's point of view of generalized Relativity. What is the significance of the words, 'The Universe is infinite'? From Einstein's as from Newton's point of view, and the pragmatist point of view as well, it means: 'If I go straightforward constantly, to the very end of eternity, I shall never come back to my point of departure.' But is this possible? Newton necessarily replies, 'Yes,' since, in his view, space extends indefinitely, independent of the bodies that are plunged in it, whether the number of stars is limited or not. But Einstein says, 'No.' For the Relativist the Universe may not be infinite. Then has it boundaries? Is it cut off by we know not what balustrades? No, it is not limited.

Things may be limitless without being infinite. For example, a man occupying space on the surface of the Earth can move about on it in all directions without being stopped by any limit. The surface of the Earth, thus regarded as the surface of any sphere at all, is therefore at once finite and limitless. It is enough to carry over into the space of three dimensions what on the spherical surface takes place in two dimensions, in order to understand that the Universe may be at once finite and yet limitless.

In consequence of gravitation, the Universe of Einstein is not Euclidian, but is incurved. It is difficult, if not impossible, to represent or to visualize incurved space; but this difficulty ought to apply only to our imagination, limited by the custom of our senses, not to our reason, which can go further and higher. It is still one of the most frequent errors of mankind to think that the imagination is possessed of stronger wings than reason; yet to be convinced of the opposite it is sufficient to compare what the most poetic of the ancients dreamed about the starry arch, with what modern science can demonstrate for us.

Thus our problem stands: Let us neglect for a moment the somewhat irregular distribution of stars in our stellar system, and let us suppose it almost homogeneous. What condition is necessary so that this division of the stars may remain stable under the influence of gravitation? Mathematical calculation affords this response: For such a result, the curve of space ought to be constant and such that space is closed upon itself after the fashion of a spherical surface. Then the rays of the stars' light may traverse such a limitless and yet still finite Universe eternally and indefinitely.

If the cosmos is in this sense spherical, one may even believe that the rays emanating from one star, the sun for example, may converge at a diametrically opposite part of the Universe after having gone around it, and may then return to their point of departure.

One might then expect to see stars in opposite points of the heavens, one of which would be nothing but the image, the phantom of the other — its 'double,' in the sense in which the ancient Egyptians understood that word. In fact this 'double,' this star-image, would represent to our eyes, not what the generating star — the star-object — really is, but what it was in the epoch

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when it sent forth the rays forming the image — that is to say, some millions of years before. If we were to observe the star-object and the star-image at the same time, reality and mirage together, we should see one to be very different from the other, since the image would show us the star as it was thousands of centuries ago. It may even be that the image would be brighter than the object, since in the interval the latter would have grown dimmer, as it gradually felt the chill of centuries.

It is improbable that we should often find these phantom stars, the luminous and unreal daughters of the true stars, for the rays of light on their course through the Universe are usually bent by the stars near which they pass, and in consequence their concentration or convergence will rarely be perfect at the antipodes from the real star. Besides, these rays will have been more or less absorbed by the cosmic matter that they have encountered on the journey. Yet it is by no means impossible that at some time in the future astronomers may observe this phenomenon, and they may already have observed it in the past, without knowing it. What observers could not do yesterday they may do to-morrow, thanks to the teachings of the new science, which may thus reverse the astronomy of observation and find some day a dazzling aureole of new verification — astonishing results, wholly unforeseen, new conceptions that in their fantastic poetry surpass the most romantic fabrications of the imagination. The real, or at least the possible, mounts to dizzy heights never yet attained by the wings of fantasy.

I have just spoken of the millions of years that light requires to complete the circuit of our incurved Universe. By taking as a starting point the amount of matter contained in the Milky Way — partly known — one can readily calculate the curve of the Universe and its radius. It appears that this radius has a minimum length equivalent to 150,000,000 light-years, and it therefore requires at least 900,000,000 light-years to complete the circuit of the Universe if it is limited to the Milky Way and its annexes — a figure perfectly compatible with the astronomical observations of the stellar system and also with those far greater figures obtained by ranking the spiral nebulæ among the Milky Ways.

So, for the Relativist, the Universe can be limitless without being infinite. As for the pragmatist who in imagination walks straightforward through an indefinite period, — who follows, that is, what he regards as a straight line, the path of light — he must inevitably end by arriving again at the star from which he started, always providing that he has sufficient time at his disposal. Then he will admit that if this is the nature of things, the Universe is not infinite. But infinite or finite, the Universe can then, in principle, be controlled by experience and some day we may make sure whether space and the cosmos in its entirety conforms to the ideas of Newton or to those of Einstein. Unhappily, that is an experiment of long duration, which involves some slight practical difficulties! One may, therefore, without too greatly compromising ourselves in our expressions of opinion as to the new order, not feel obliged to choose definitely between the two conceptions and may yet give the benefit of the doubt to the one that he regards as false.

There is a third problem of importance to the physicist, if not to the pragmatist. If all the stars we know are connected with the Milky Way, then other Universes, still more distant, may be inaccessible to us because they are optically isolated from our own, per-

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haps by the phenomena of the cosmic absorption of light of which we have already spoken.

But this might also be caused by a condition which — however shocking it may appear to Relativists — will seem possible to Newtonians. Matter and the ether — the medium for the transmission of light waves; whose existence Einstein himself has in the end had to admit, although denying its ordinarily accepted cinematic properties — seem more and more, in the light of recent physical discoveries, to be only modes one of another. There is therefore nothing to prove that these two forms of subtance may not always be associated with one another.

Have we not, then, the right to think that perhaps the whole of our visible Universe is a mere local concentration of matter and nothing but an isolated bubble of ether? If absolute space exists, which is by no means the same thing as saying that it should be perceptible to our senses or accessible to us, it is independent not merely of matter but of ether; and in that case, around about our Universe sweeps a space that is empty even of ether. Beyond it other Universes may be pulsing — worlds which to us are forever as if they did not exist.

Nothing can reach our senses or our minds from them, no ray of light can penetrate the black and mute abysm that encircles our starry island. Our glances are forever prisoners in this giant monad — our Universe, already grown too small.

EXUBERANCE IN LITERATURE

BY GERALD BULLETT

From the *New Statesman, November* 26
(Liberal Labor Weekly)

Ecstasy, not exuberance, is the soul of art. No assembly of words not animated by a spark of that divine fire deserves the name of literature. Not always does the soul of man shine through his body, nor the ecstasy in literature flame visibly in its outward form, but man without soul is a mere carcass, and art without ecstasy a dead letter.

Literary ecstasy, in highest manifestation, is poetry. Exuberance is her lusty brother — a wag, a roysterer, a frequenter of taverns. While his divine sister soars in the empyrean, he swaggers along country roads or sits in inns, consuming beer and cheese. Insisting that criticism, no less than literature itself, is an art, not a science, he will not submit to definition. If you squeeze him, kicking, into your bottle, he will infallibly escape before you can cork him in, or get the label stuck. And since he has as many names as a character in a Russian novel, and as many disguises as Sherlock Holmes, it is less profitable to describe him than to pay him the sincere, if unmannerly, tribute of the pointing finger: —

At the sound of Ralph's voice the head reappeared, and the mouth, displaying a very long row of very white teeth, uttered in

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a mincing tone the words, 'Demmit. What, Nickleby! oh, demmit!' Having uttered which ejaculation, the gentleman advanced and shook hands with Ralph with great warmth. He was dressed in a gorgeous morning gown, with a waistcoat and Turkish trousers of the same pattern, a pink silk handkerchief, and bright green slippers, and had a very copious watch chain wound round his body. Moreover, he had whiskers and a moustache, both dyed black, and gracefully curled. . . . He had married on his whiskers; upon which property he had previously subsisted, and which he had recently improved, after patient cultivation, by the addition of a moustache, which promised to secure him an easy independence.

There are obvious faults of style here (as everywhere else in Dickens's work): the clumsy 'having uttered which ejaculation,' and that frequent repetition of 'very' which betrays conscious effort; but there is also genuine exuberance. You may think that exuberance has got out of control when you are asked to accept, as a statement of fact, the remark that Mantalini had a copious watch chain wound round his body; but — though I think it churlish to grudge even *that* delicious absurdity to a creature who calls his wife 'My senses' idol,' and 'My cup of existence's sweetener' — no such demand is made upon you. Lies are often designated, in the language of charity, fairy tales; and Dickens's lie about Mantalini is in that glorious fairy-tale tradition which has given us grass that sings, and a man with a blue beard. It is *splendide mendax*, differing from these others, however, in that it does not even demand 'that willing suspension of disbelief which constitutes poetic faith.' Dickens no more asks us to believe that Mantalini's stomach was literally encircled by a watch chain, than Herrick wishes to deceive us into thinking that his Julia's lips are really ripe cherries such as may be bought by the pound in Covent Garden market and eaten from a paper bag in the waiting-room at Covent Garden station.

Exuberance covers a multitude of sins; and one should not bring to the quest for it in literature a spirit coldly analytical: the aim of criticism should be rather to distinguish the true from the false. For there is a spurious gusto, an apeing of exuberance, that is as dreadful as statistics, as desolating as that facetious old gentleman who haunts children's parties. It resembles the true as closely as the wax figures in Madame Tussaud's (the very temple of art, if realism were all) resemble the men and women they so odiously counterfeit; and it suggests, in the moment of recognition, as they do, something more shocking than the sight of death, namely the imitation (if not the parody) of life. To go no further than Dickens for examples: Mark Tapley and the Cheeryble brothers are puppets galvanized into action by false exuberance; not because they do and say the same things again and again (for the sun, who rises every morning, does not bore us), but because a formula of exaggeration and repetition, and not genuine enthusiasm, has gone to their making.

Besides exuberance in fiction, and besides this shadow that apes it, there is a third, verbal exuberance: manifest without alloy preëminently in the poetry of Spenser, but also in Shakespeare, Marlowe, and indeed most other poets. Here we approach a fundamental of art, the artist's delight in his medium. The supreme lines in English poetry (Lear's 'Do not laugh at me . . .' and perhaps a score besides) were born of some diviner ecstasy than we can hope to define; but much poetry owes its music to skill and this rhetorical exuberance alone. Swinburne was full of it; he was often indeed the servant rather than the master of his style: his enthusiasm jerks the reins out of his hands and

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gallops away with him, and with us too, whom he snatches up to the saddle behind him. And as we ride, he sings to us of delight that lives an hour and love that lives a day, until we cease to be conscious of the wind rushing in our ears.

> From too much love of living,
> From hope and fear set free,
> We thank, with brief thanksgiving,
> Whatever gods may be,
> That no life lives forever,
> That dead men rise up never,
> That even the weariest river
> Winds somewhere safe to sea.
>
> Then sun nor star shall waken,
> Nor any change of light:
> Nor sound of water shaken,
> Nor any sound or sight:
> Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
> Nor days nor things diurnal;
> Only a sleep eternal
> In an eternal night.

But if, surrendering our reason to this music, we say: 'He can make even annihilation pleasant to us,' we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Annihilation is neither pleasant nor unpleasant; it is precisely nothing at all, and no man can make it anything else. When we read those stanzas we think, not of nothingness (for that it is impossible to think of), but of the sound of water, the buttercup yellow and lush green of spring, the beauty of frost and snow and tingling air, and of getting into a warm bed after a day's strenuous work. We think, in fact, of the very things that the poet is so rapturously negativing. We are tricked into believing the prospect of death beautiful, while unconsciously luxuriating in the poet's images of life.

Of exuberance in its broader sense the finest examples in the fiction of our day are to be found in *The History of Mr. Polly*, a book that has never been adequately praised. No doubt Mr. Wells himself, by his adventures in theology and history and sociology, has distracted attention from it; but its comparative neglect by the educated Press remains astonishing. For *Mr. Polly* challenges Dickens, and challenges him successfully: it contains as much gold, and less dross, than an equal number of pages in *Nicholas Nickleby* or *Great Expectations*. It is shot through with exuberance and color and a humor that rises to beauty. Mr. Polly, the little unsuccessful shopkeeper, with his rich imagination, his real literary sense of the taste and color of words, is a figure infinitely delightful. He goes his outwardly commonplace way, a king of dreams, hungry for romance and beauty and what he called 'joy de vive.' Words 'attracted him curiously, words rich in suggestion, and he loved a novel and striking phrase. His school training had given him little or no mastery of the mysterious pronunciation of English. . . . His only rule was not to be misled by the spelling. . . . He avoided every recognized phrase in the language, and mispronounced everything in order that he should n't be suspected of ignorance but whim.' And for everything that caught his attention Mr. Polly found a phrase. 'When he strolled, with his hands behind his back, along the cloisters behind the cathedral, and looked at the rich grass plot in the centre, he had the strangest sense of being at home.' 'Portly capons,' he used to murmur to himself, under the impression that he was naming a characteristic type of mediæval churchman. In adolescence Mr. Polly conceived an admiration almost idolatrous for that great exuberant whose name he chose to render as 'Rabooloose'; he thought the birthfeast of Gargantua the most glorious piece of writing in the world. Later on, during fifteen years of profitless shopkeeping, —

> He read everything he got except theology, and as he read, his little unsuccessful

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circumstances vanished, and the wonder of life returned to him; the routine of reluctant getting up, opening shop, pretending to dust it with zest, breakfasting with a shop egg underdone or overdone . . . and coffee made Miriam's way and full of little particles, the return to the shop, the morning paper . . . all these things vanished as the auditorium of a theatre vanishes when the stage is lit.

Finally, to escape from his indigestion, from unfriendly neighbors, such as Mr. Rusper, who 'thought books were written to enshrine Great Thoughts,' and Mr. Chuffles, the grocer, 'a small, hairy, silently intent polygamist,' and from the dingy wife and dingy routine that chance had thrust upon him — to escape from these Mr. Polly quietly disappeared from Fishbourne. His shop and its contents had been burned to the ground, and 'the insurance money he was to receive made everything humane and kindly and practicable. He would take exactly twenty-one pounds, and all the rest he would leave to Miriam.' A month or two later he found his spiritual home in the Potwell Inn, the description of which leads to a passage, unsurpassed of its kind in English literature, in which exuberance rises as near to poetry as, in prose comedy, it is likely ever to rise.

But these were the mere background to the really pleasant thing in the spectacle, which was quite the plumpest woman Mr. Polly had ever seen, seated in an armchair in the midst of all these bottles and glasses and glittering things, peacefully and tranquilly, and without the slightest loss of dignity, asleep. Many people would have called her a fat woman, but Mr. Polly's innate sense of epithet told him from the outset that plump was the word. She had shapely brows and a straight, well-shaped nose, kind lines and contentment about her mouth, and beneath it the jolly chins clustered like chubby little cherubim about the feet of an Assumptioning Madonna. Her plumpness was firm and pink and wholesome, and her hands, dimpled at every joint, were clasped in front of her; she seemed, as it were, to embrace herself with infinite confidence and kindliness, as one who knew herself good in substance, good in essence, and would show her gratitude to God by that ready acceptance of that He had given her. Her head was a little on one side, not much, but just enough to speak of trustfulness, and rob her of the stiff effect of self-reliance. And she slept.

'*My* sort,' said Mr. Polly, and opened the door very softly. . . .

In the celestial city of the imagination, where the Wife of Bath, Falstaff, Partridge, Parson Adams, My Uncle Toby, Dr. Primrose, the Reverend Mr. Collins, Pickwick, and Mantalini, enjoy immortality with their peers, there must be many an evening, between chapters, given over to feasting and argument and high revelry. I like to think that the scene of these gatherings is sometimes the Potwell Inn, and that Mr. Polly, delighted, modestly silent, and coining in his mind rich queer phrases, sits not incongruously at that Festivacious Board.

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A PAGE OF VERSE

LIGHT O' LOVE

BY A. H. BULLEN

[*Weeping-Cross and Other Rimes*]

I LOVED yon hawthorn passing well,
So late the pride and crown of May;
'There's naught,' I swore, 'that can excel
Hawthorn for scent and rich array.'
Now fickle I
My oaths deny,
And vow these starry elderflowers —
For fragrance rare,
Hue fresh and fair —
Put down all gaudy hawthorn-bowers.

Since I have once falsed faith, I fear
My restless fancy will be ranging,
And still, as older grows the year,
Old loves for new I shall be changing:
Soon eglantine
Her wreaths will twine,
And elderflowers no more be seen,
Then without shame
I will acclaim
Lush eglantine the Summer's Queen.

A DON'T-CARE RHYME OF THE NIGHT

BY A. O. M.

[*Westminster Gazette*]

IT does n't matter.
The air's washed clean,
The sky's all studded with stars;
Laggard old moon has risen at last,
Wind's a-rushing with gusty blast
That pushes and elbows things not so fast
Right out of his way till he gets past;
And then he does n't know whither he's hieing
But hangs in the branches softly sighing,
Letting you think he's almost dying,
Till he spies something else to hustle and bustle
And it's up again and away!

It does n't matter.
You stupid things
That worried me all day long.
Out in the night if you dare, you fools!
Mirror your faces in starry pools
And see if the moon with her silver tools
Can't chip and chisel the ugly places
Till you have to look close for the smallest traces
Of whatever it was made you such disgraces —
You moping, miserable moaners and groaners,
You futile things of the day!

Moon a-shining —
Stars a-winking —
Wind a-singing —
It does n't matter at all!

JOY

BY W. H. DAVIES

[*To-Day*]

POOR souls, who think that joy is bought
With pelf;
The bait that captures joy is joy
Itself.
My joy it came mysteriously
At birth;
I give it to, not take it from,
The earth.
Have pity on my enemy:
Again,
And yet again, my triumph gives
Him pain.
Come, Death, give me life's perfect end;
Take me
In my sleep, O Death, and do not
Wake me.

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A GASTRONOMIC CRITIQUE

ELABORATE — and presumably authoritative — criticisms of the several cuisines of some of the leading London restaurants have begun to appear in the staid columns of the *Saturday Review*, which apparently proposes in the future to place the chef's art on a par with those of poet, painter, and musician. Under the heading 'Saturday Dinners,' the anonymous critic discusses — with all the gravity in the world, and to the extent of two columns — a dinner served to him in his professional critical capacity at the Café Royal. Course by course, the learned authority who writes the article (with an obvious lifetime of good dining behind him) discusses the viands.

He condemns the evil practice — bad art, in short! — of including *hors-d'œuvre* in a dinner menu. Alas that British gastronomy should come to this! Yet he contrives to be broad-minded about it, for, after all, 'the Café Royal has always been noted for the excellence of these preliminaries, and it would have been a churlish pedantry to have insisted on their deletion from the menu.' No pedant was this critic, therefore — he did n't insist on the deletion of the *hors-d'œuvre;* he merely ate them.

And the soup — ah, the soup of the Café Royal, 'with a neat section of very marrow-full marrow-bone to give it additional savor'! But even here this exquisite *gourmet* declines to be trapped into unqualified approval. The soup with the marrow-full marrow-bone in it 'was good in itself and in so short a dinner, but would, in our opinion, be excessive in any heavier dinner, for which we would prefer a very small quantity of consommé.'

To the charms of *délices de sole bréval*, however, our epicure capitulates entirely, 'for the principal chef of the Café Royal, before he attained that dignity, was particularly responsible for the cooking of fish, and he is not only a master of all elaborate modes of dealing with fish, but' — virtuoso that he is! — 'can even be depended upon for perfection in regard to that royal treat, a plainly boiled turbot.' What more, pray, could one say of Mr. Kreisler after a Beethoven sonata?

With the following courses, the diner recovers his critical aplomb, for, although he finds *faisan Souvaroff* — 'into the preparation of which truffles, *foie gras*, and Madeira enter' — to be 'a familiar but ever-welcome menu item,' he is still constrained to harbor lingering doubts that 'possibly the taste of the dish might have been a little more pronounced.' He approves his salad — 'though our own preference is for greater simplicity in a salad accompanying a bird prepared otherwise than by plain roasting' — bestows mild epicurean praise upon his dessert, and becomes enthusiastic over the wines.

He is a very scholarly critic — all the necessary data requisite to the confirmation of his conclusions are at hand. He prints the menu, he even prints the bill — four pounds; but there is no mention of Russian famines in this issue of the *Saturday Review*.

*

ON THE PREVALENCE OF GLOOM IN FICTION

IT is a curious fact that an ordinarily bright and cheerful citizen of the French Republic or the British Empire is likely to be seized with a sudden access of gloom and to view life through Russian spectacles the moment he sits down to write short stories.

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Perhaps this is due to the vogue of the Russian novelists. Has not Mr. Hugh Walpole avowedly turned to Russian models in at least two of his more recent novels? And have not others of his fellow craftsmen followed or anticipated his example? It is the fashion nowadays to blame upon the Russians everything from political upheavals to the mysterious disappearance of ships at sea; and surely if a nation's shoulders are broad enough to bear all the sins that have been attributed to the Bolsheviki, a few minor literary peccadilloes, more or less, are no great addition to the burden. At any rate, there is no gainsaying that many of the best short stories being written just now in both France and England, are tragic in theme and gloomy in atmosphere — certainly not of a type calculated to make joy and good cheer flourish in the reader's heart.

Nothing could illustrate the situation better than the series of doleful tales that, during the last three months, the foreign mails have brought to the *Living Age*, one after another, in dismal succession. The first was in a French periodical, though its author was a Russian, and the story therefore had, by all the laws of literature, a perfect right to be as gloomy as it listed. It was an interesting story — it was even a powerful story; but cheerful it was not, for it recounted the slow deaths by starvation of a family of five. The next was a *conte* by a well-known French novelist, a man who cannot touch any theme without giving it distinction; but he, too, alas, was in a melancholy mood, so melancholy that he saw nothing for it save to pitch his hero into the sea forthwith, and have done with him. The hero of the next story was an ex-soldier unable to find employment; the author of *his* being contrived to snap the threads of existence and plot together under the wheels of an automobile. The next was a sketch from a rather *outré* and esoteric London quarterly — the journal of a coterie of artists who do not trouble themselves over public approval — an admirable little piece of English prose, but it ended with the hero chopping off a criminal's head, sorely against his own wishes and the criminal's. This was followed by a vivid historical tale, which had merits not usual in the dubious *genre* of historical fiction — but here again heads fell in gory profusion.

What wonder that a harrassed editor greeted an incoming magazine from India, the land of Brahma and Buddhistic calm, with joy? Here at least would be serenity and peace, even in fiction! But Mr. Ghandi has been active; India has changed. Fortunately, this hero was not torn in pieces by a Moplah mob; he was permitted to die in comparative peace from the bite of a cobra. Evidently serpents, as the ladies who write about fashions say, 'are coming in,' for *Je Sais Tout*, a popular Parisian magazine, publishes — in its Christmas number, too — a harrowing play, in which a sea-captain and most of his crew are killed by cobras escaping from a cage consigned to a menagerie.

There followed a desperate hunt for cheerful stories. One after another the liveliest French newspapers were scanned. Column after column of *Nos Contes* was devoured. At last! A cheerful story, even a moderately funny story — but the principal character was a goldfish, and the goldfish leaped recklessly from his globe and perished in a frying pan. Still, the frying of a fish is by no means so tragic a theme as a decapitation, a drowning, a suicide, or a death in battle. It passed for a funny story.

But the very next mail brought a Chinese tale. It was called, 'The *Coffin* of the Mandarin' — and it is as yet unread.

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A GREAT TRANSLATOR

TRANSLATIONS of the writings of Henri Fabre have perhaps contributed most to the American reputation of Mr. Alexander Louis Teixeira de Mattos, who died recently at St. Ives, Cornwall; but he was almost equally famous in England for his translations from Dutch, Danish, and German. His translations were far removed from the ordinary hackwork, literature in their own right.

The *Times* publishes a short sketch of his career from the pen of an old friend, whose name is not given: —

His last words to one friend, pronounced from a sick-bed, in the grip of the latest fog, were: 'I would sooner die in the train than in London.' His last letter, from Cornwall, testified: 'There is nothing for nervous dyspepsia or gastric horribobblums like seven goodish hours in a swift and powerful railway express. I have been free from pain or sickness for the first night since Wednesday week.' . . . Perhaps, then, when his physical heart failed him, he was not required to know any more suffering; perhaps he divined the approaching visitation and greeted it with a characteristic jest and his characteristic faith. 'I beg my friends,' he had written earlier, 'to pray for my soul and of their charity from time to time, and that not only on the anniversary of my decease, to have a mass said for its repose.'

He is known, wherever English is read, for his versions of Maeterlinck and Fabre, Couperus and Zola, Streuvels and Ewald, to name but a few. With more than half a dozen languages at his command, his translations are numbered by scores; and one alone contained more than a million words. An unwearying worker, a deep scholar, a friend whose time and learning were at the disposal of any who called on them, a punctilious man of business, a prolific correspondent — it was a mystery to all who knew him that he could find leisure for so many interests. *Who's Who* gives his sole recreation as 'bridge'; and his perverse brilliance of declaration and play would have made him a separate reputation if anyone had taken even his bridge seriously. But who could be serious with a man of six-and-fifty who refused to grow up? His incurable youth was vented in the whims and word-plays of his letters; there, for all the disguise of a foreign name, he was shown as the son of Edward Lear and the grandson of Charles Lamb.

Loyal and tender, generous and understanding, he kept his friendships in repair through two generations; a collaborator with Dowson, a friend of John Gray, an assistant-editor to Frank Harris, his niche in the nineties has been commemorated by a Max caricature; his adult life was divided between the Temple and Chelsea; his leisure between the Reform Club and the Cleveland. He was once a Royalist and always a Radical. The war pitchforked him into a Government Department; and at the Armistice he could boast of having been a merchant and a publisher, a journalist and an editor, a Civil servant and a translator. 'I should like to live till I'm a thousand,' he declared within three days of his death. Could he have fancied that in a thousand years' time he would have outgrown his zest for life? Did he imagine himself a grave and reverend signior by then?

By his great series of translations, his place in literature is assured him. Deep learning and fastidious taste were joined to an exquisite love of finish. His place is assured him with his friends, though he would not have wished them to carry long faces. 'Death, to my mind, can never be *funny*,' he whispered, in protest against an untimely witticism; but in mental pain and the lesser bodily afflictions he recommended others — and himself — to 'cultivate a pococurantist attitude.' Those who knew him may humbly doubt whether this whimsical, tender, unflinching soul stood in need of prayer; but, of their love rather than of the charity he asked, they will not withhold a mass for its repose.

✠

'JOB MOTLEY'

'H. S.' is responsible for this entertaining bit of — so to speak — enfranchised verse, which appears under the

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title 'Job Motley' in the columns of the *New Witness:* —

It was like this.
We were having a casual pint together,
John Galsworthy and I,
In the Spoon River Arms;
And, 'I'm sorry for you,' he said;
'And I for you,' I said.
'But I'm more sorry for you than you are for me,' he said.
'Well, I'm sorry for that,' I said.
There was no more to be said,
So we parted.

*

KREISLER, LLOYD GEORGE, AND SOME OTHERS

A DISTINGUISHED violinist can no more steer clear of politics entirely than — if we may credit the English newspapers — a British Prime Minister can steer clear of music. Mr. Fritz Kreisler, as is well known, recently declined the Austrian ambassadorship to the United States, although President Harding is said to have declared that he would be '100 per cent *persona grata.*' Mr. Kreisler could not, however, so easily avoid the political complications of a virtuoso's career, for when, during the Irish negotiations, he played at a musicale at No. 10 Downing Street, he found that Lloyd George — who very probably was entertaining the Irish delegation that day — wanted some Irish music on the programme. Fortunately it was only a day or two before that Mr. Kreisler had been attracted by a Londonderry air heard on the lips of a street singer, and had jotted it down. He arranged it for the violin, and the Prime Minister's wish was gratified.

But the British press is intent on the political aspects of Lloyd George's musicales. The Irish implications of his programme did not escape comment. The *Morning Post* — perhaps the bitterest of the Prime Minister's critics — seizes upon some Welsh songs sung by Madoc Davies at another No. 10 Downing Street musicale, and turns the music to its own account. Mr. Davies sang by request several Welsh songs, among them the plaintive 'Britain's Lament,' and Mr. George, obviously moved, said to him, 'Thank you! I feel much better for it.' The *Morning Post* comments on the incident in satirical verse: —

Loud sang that rara avis,
Professor Madoc Davies,
Sang the plaintive songs of Wales,
Sang of Celtic fairy tales!

In the hour of our Surrender
Sang he in a voice so tender,
That he almost moved to tears
Those who had n't cried for years.

Since the voice of his devotion
Filled L. G. with strange emotion,
Might Professor Davies not
Touch another tender spot?

Might he not (I put the question
Forward as a mere suggestion),
If he sang his very best,
Soothe Valera's savage breast?

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